

August 15 cents

BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

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548



MINNESOTA A. D. 1362

H. Bedford-Jones, Leland Jamieson, George F. Worts, William Makin, Vilhjalmur Stefansson

Enchanted Lands

MANY years ago the writer was a homesteader in southern New Mexico. And once or twice during the four years of his sojourn there, he heard some wandering cowboy or sheep-herder remark that there were some "bat caves" not far away in the Guadalupe Mountains, where one could get guano for fertilizer. But we were preoccupied with laying up mud bricks to make an adobe house, and with pressing immediate problems of food and fuel and livestock; and like our few and far-scattered neighbors, we didn't bother to investigate the bat caves. It was years afterward that these caves were discovered to be one of the natural wonders of the world; and now, as the Carlsbad Caverns, they are a famous National Monument.

It is easy to sermonize from a text like that; and we cannot forbear indulging in a little of it. . . . How many of us, right now, for example, are living near some extraordinary undiscovered thing, and (like the writer in his New Mexico days), are too preoccupied with commonplace affairs to explore further? What marvels of scientific achievement lie just around the corner? What amazing inventions would be possible if some one could investigate more deeply? What enchanted lands are yet to be discovered?

No doubt this thought lies in the back of nearly everyone's mind: and therein we may have the basis for the fascination which stories like William Chester's "Hawk of the Wilderness," or Kingsley Moses' "Maid of the Moon" exercise over us. It is most improbable that any such enchanted land as Nato'wa exists; but—it *might*. It is even less likely that any form of life remains anywhere on the moon; but Kingsley Moses (who is the son of a Protestant bishop and a man of unquestionable sincerity) takes the risk of infuriating the astronomers and physicists—and thereby gives us a story of rare power and beauty

Likewise, indeed, some such thought animates your editor when he sits down to read through a big pile of manuscripts: the chances are, he knows, that most of them will be commonplace; but what Carlsbad Cavern, what wonder of the literary world, may he not discover if he only explores far enough? Wonders of literature, of course, like other marvels, are rare. But very fine things (as witness the stories in this issue) turn up often enough to keep us hopeful—and to give you, we believe, a magazine of real quality.

—*The Editor*

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AUGUST, 1935

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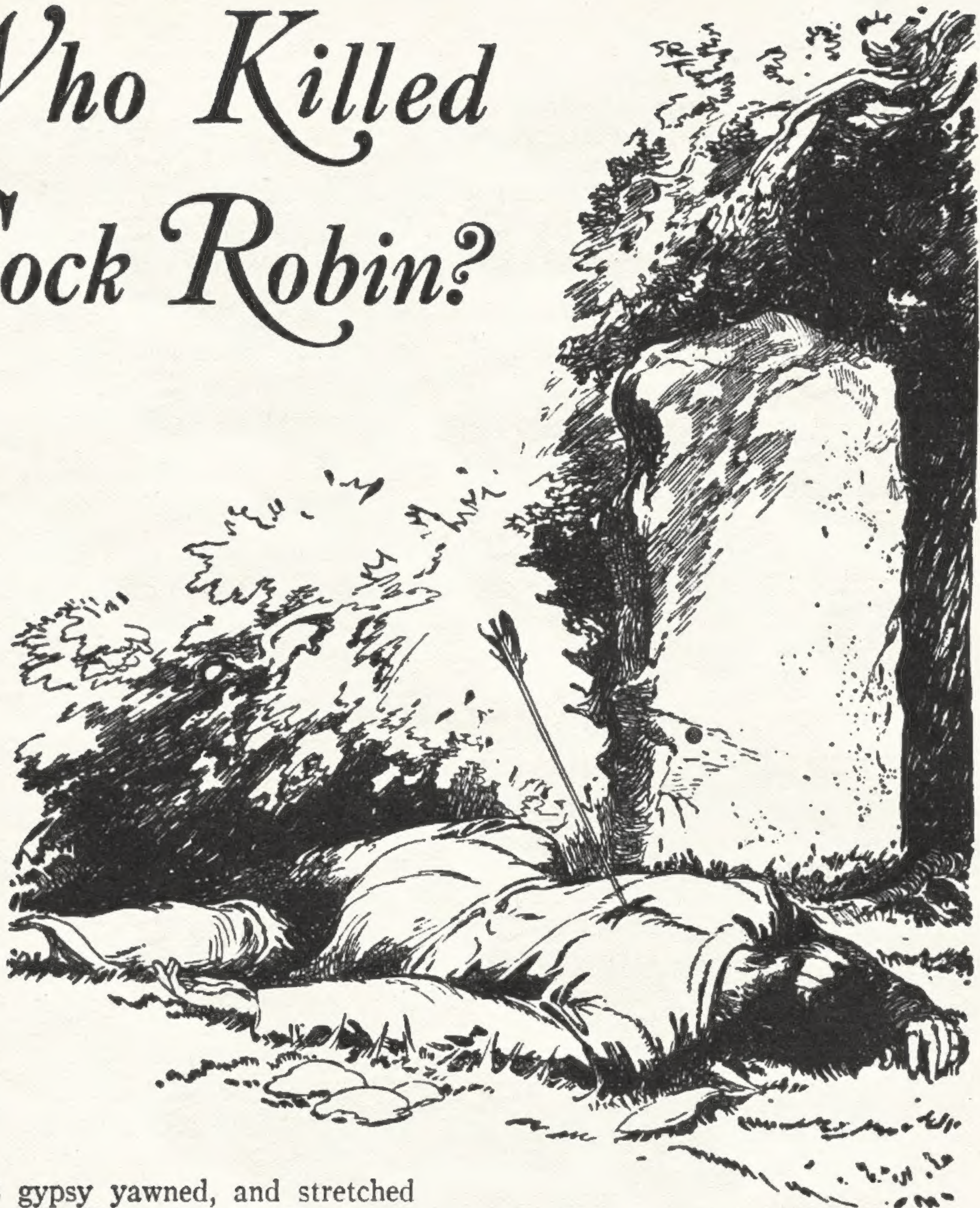
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Why don't you write?

Who Killed Cock Robin?



THE gypsy yawned, and stretched himself. Beneath the ancient oaks of the New Forest the morning mist lay in swathes. Ghost-like, his little caravan wagon was parked several yards away. Over a smoky fire crouched a woman in a purple shawl.

"My tea, woman. Bring it quickly!" drawled the gypsy in the Calo language.

Sullen-faced, but nevertheless beautiful with her olive-tinted skin and big black eyes, the woman came toward him with a steaming cup of tea. Her red dress draggled the dew of the grass.

"Here it is, husband," she said. As he took the cup in his brown hand she flung back her head of shining black hair so that her ear-rings glittered golden in the morning sunshine. "You are early this morning, Taro," she added.

He nodded, gulping the hot tea.

"It is a holiday among the Gorgios," he replied. "They will come into the

forest to gaze foolishly at the gray stone. And I shall sell them many postcards."

He grinned and brought forth from the pocket of his tattered black coat a little bundle of glazed postcards, picturing the famous Rufus Stone.

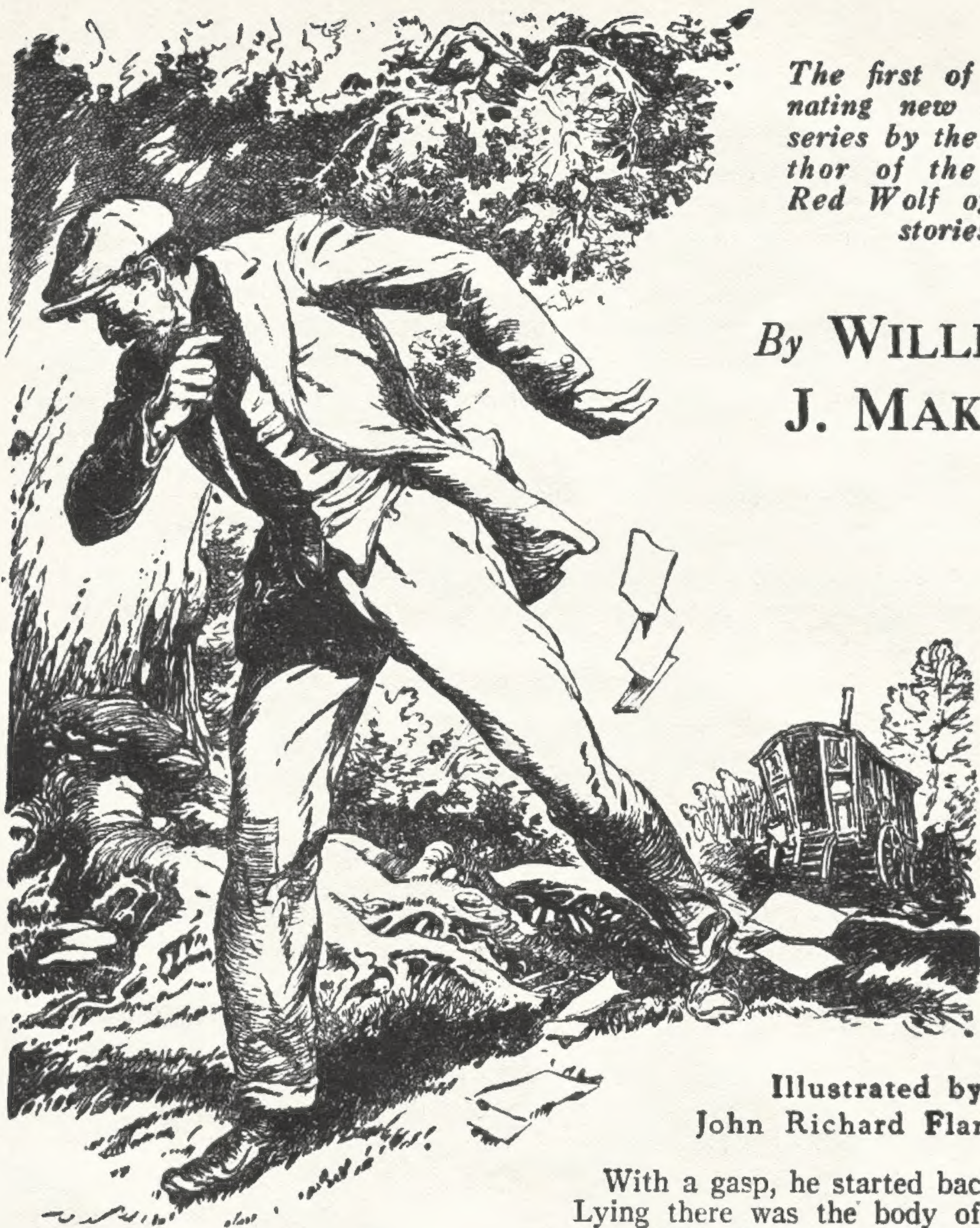
A smile broke the sullen face of the gypsy woman.

"And maybe, husband, the white-faced Gorgios will cross my palm with silver when I tell them foolish tales. I am a good fortune-teller," she added.

"Maybe they will come," he said shrugging. He handed the empty cup back to the woman. "There is a rabbit to be skinned. Have it ready, *juva*, for my return. I shall be hungry."

"Yes, husband."

The gypsy slouched out of the glade towards the circling ring of oak trees. His walk betrayed the animal, the crea-



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ture of the wilds. It was cat-like; for the modern gypsy, like the house-cat, contrives to live a wild life along with the comforts of civilization.

IN perhaps five minutes he reached the glade where stood the stone marking the tragedy of that second day of August in the year 1100, when William Rufus was struck to the ground with an arrow through his heart. Fat oaks, their roots rioting tenaciously in the soft earth, now surrounded the glade.

Clutching his packet of postcards, the gypsy marched confidently toward the stone, his eyes on a little flock of pigeons overhead. Suddenly he stumbled. His head jerked in surprise, and the postcards were scattered. He bent down to pick them up, but his dirty brown hands touched something soft.

With a gasp, he started back in fear. Lying there was the body of a young man. The face was in the earth, and sticking out of the back was a long arrow, the feathers damp with dew.

No need to look twice to realize that the man was dead. And as the gypsy brought his hand away from that soft touch, he saw that the fingers were smeared with blood.

"A Gorgio—murdered!" he muttered.

Alarm, terror, gleamed in his dark eyes. He looked around hastily. His teeth were bared like those of an animal at bay. Then, like another sort of animal,—a questing hound, perhaps,—he began quartering back and forth across the glade, studying the footprints he found, and unraveling the tale they told: for like all his kind, he was an inveterate poacher, and in consequence, an accomplished tracker and trailer. Finally parently deciding he had learned could, and fearful of being found

dread vicinity, he began to run lightly but purposefully toward the main road and the houses of civilization.

At the inn of the little village to which he soon came, the gypsy showed his appreciation of civilization's conveniences: he put through a telephone call to London, and presently was talking excitedly over the wire in the Romany tongue.

"CHIEF COMMISSIONER speaking. Has that arrest been made?"

The voice over the telephone seemed a bit irritable. But Detective Inspector Graves was not to be intimidated.

"No sir," he replied. "I'm waiting a telephone call from Sir Lionel Corbin's place in Mayfair Mews. My men should be there now."

But the Chief Commissioner of Scotland Yard was obviously worried. "I suppose you realize, Graves, that this arrest will set the newspaper screaming with headlines in the morning? Sir Lionel Corbin is something of a celebrity in the West End. I wouldn't have granted you that warrant if you hadn't been so sure of your facts."

"I wouldn't have asked for it if I hadn't been sure he was the murderer," replied Graves imperturbably. He leaned back in his office chair at Scotland Yard and winked deliberately at Constable Brown, who was busy at a filing-cabinet. "There will probably be bigger headlines in the newspapers if we don't make an arrest tonight," he added, provokingly.

"Yes, yes, I know," muttered the voice of the Chief Commissioner. "But somehow I can't believe Corbin capable of that murder. Dammit, I've dined with the man!"

"He did the killing, all right, sir," asserted Graves. "With his bow and arrow," he added.

"Have it your own way," testily replied the Chief Commissioner. "But keep me informed of all developments."

As Graves hung up, he glanced toward the headlines of the evening paper that lay open on his desk:

WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?

Scotland Yard Believed Baffled in Mystery Murder of New Forest.

"Well, they'll soon know," he muttered, lighting a cigarette and relaxing as he thought back over the crime that had occupied him for the past three

1. A sensational crime, indeed!

gypsy, one of the many hundreds named the New Forest, had stum-

bled across the body. He had reported it at the Lyndhurst police-station. Two constables had immediately motored out to the scene. There, within a few yards of the Rufus Stone, lay the body of a young man shot by an arrow, whose sharp steel tip had penetrated the heart from the back.

Death had been sudden, almost instantaneous. And the autopsy revealed that the young man had been dead for about nine hours when the gypsy found him. There was no difficulty about identifying the victim. A wallet in the pocket containing notes to the value of four pounds, and several visiting-cards, told the police that the young man was Robin Finch, and his residence a hotel in Kensington.

For some hours the gypsy had been detained on suspicion while the telephone and telegraph between Lyndhurst and London had been busy. Scotland Yard began to take up the trail of the dead man from Kensington. Inspector Graves found the case easy—too easy!

It was discovered that the previous afternoon Robin Finch, a popular young man about town known inevitably as "Cock" Robin, had been called for by an imposing-looking car. Robin Finch had told the hotel porter that he was going for a dinner picnic in the New Forest. A group of people in the car, including a good-looking and expensively dressed girl, had welcomed him joyously. They drove off. That was the last glimpse of Robin Finch alive in London.

In exactly twenty minutes Detective-Inspector Graves had traced the car. It had been hired by a rich Australian, one James Dogger, who had made a fortune out of timber and was now giving his wife and daughter a good time in London.

FIVE minutes after establishing these facts, Graves was *en route* to the hotel where the Dogger family resided in a luxury suite. They had risen late and were at breakfast. Having introduced himself with the usual paralyzing effect, Graves had begun his questioning.

"I understand you gave a late dinner picnic in the New Forest yesterday evening, Mr. Dogger?"

Bluff and hearty, but worried, Mr. Dogger nodded.

"I aint breaking the law, surely?" he countered. "Just a whim of mine, to please the wife and my little girl. As a timber man, I got accustomed to meals among the trees. And I aint ever seen

the New Forest before. Is there a law against picnics in the Old Country?"

"Not at the moment," went on Graves disarmingly. "But perhaps you'll tell me who was on this picnic?"

"Oh, that's all right," said the Australian. "There were two friends of my little girl—Sir Lionel Corbin, and Robin Finch—Cock Robin, they calls 'im."

"Two friends of yours, Miss Dogger, eh?" asked the detective, turning to the girl.

Cora nodded, flushing slightly. "Two very great friends," she said.

"What Cora means," broke in Mrs. Dogger, "is that both these gents wish to marry her. Of course, Sir Lionel 'as a title, but he aint got no money. Now Cock Robin is bonzer in that respect. Got oodles of it."

"You all came back to town together?"

"No," explained Mrs. Dogger. "There was a bit of a tiff. Sir Lionel and Cock Robin got quarreling. All about Cora. I told 'em to take a walk to get it off their chests. They did, but only Sir Lionel came back. He said he'd left Cock Robin blazing with fury and making his way back to the road, where he was going to get a lift somehow to London. Silly, I calls it; but then, young men in love are a terrible trial."

"It must have cast rather a damper on your picnic," said Graves.

"Well, it did," nodded Dogger. "Although I says it, it was a picnic done in tip-top style. Took a chef down from London with me in the car. And I must say, I enjoyed the meal anyhow. Didn't you, Mother?"

"That I did," replied Mrs. Dogger.

"I see," mused Graves. "You had the dinner after the quarrel?"

"Yes, as soon as Sir Lionel came back."

"And you didn't see Robin Finch again that evening?"

"No," said Mr. Dogger. "We packed up about midnight, and drove back to town."

"Perhaps, Mom, I'd better ring up Robin at once," said Cora, moving to the telephone.

"I shouldn't," said Graves quietly.

"Why not?" asked the girl.

"Because he's dead. His body, with an arrow in his back, was found near the Rufus Stone early this morning."

"Murdered?" gasped Mr. Dogger.

"It looks like it," said Graves sternly.

It was as though he had thrown a hand-grenade at the group. Mrs. Dogger flopped onto the nearest couch; Cora



Isaac Heron

stood there, pale-faced and shivering. Mr. James Dogger summed up the situation in his own terse fashion:

"Hell, I wouldn't have had this happen for ten thousand pounds!"

Detective Inspector Graves judged it kindest and wisest to leave them to the calamity. But as he was departing, Mr. Dogger said:

"I expect I ought to tell you that Sir Lionel Corbin brought his bow and arrows along with him. We persuaded him to show us what he could do. He's said to be one of the finest archers in England. He's even hunted lion in East Africa with bow and arrow. He showed us in the New Forest, before nightfall, that he could hit a playing-card stuck on a tree at a distance of a hundred yards."

"Yes, I've heard of his archery skill," nodded Graves. "I'm going along to see Sir Lionel."

From that moment the affair had proceeded with the crushing millstone certainty of Scotland Yard's methods. Inspector Graves had interviewed Sir Lionel Corbin in the sparsely furnished flat which he occupied in Mayfair Mews. One of the first objects that greeted the detective as a manservant ushered him into the flat was a huge archer's bow strung against the wall.

There was also a silver trophy on a sideboard, and a framed parchment told that Sir Lionel was a member of the Royal Toxophite Society of London.

Damning evidence! The only disconcerting fact was Sir Lionel Corbin himself. The fifth baronet was disarmingly frank.

"I shouldn't be surprised to find that it is one of my arrows," he said to Graves. "As a matter of fact, I missed one out of the quiver when I got back here this morning."

"I expect the arrow to be in my possession this evening," murmured Graves.

"It all looks very black against me, eh?" said Sir Lionel. "I admit the quarrel with Finch. I detested the fellow. He boasted he was going to marry her—"

"I hear you had hopes in that direction yourself, Sir Lionel."

He flushed. "Yes, that's true."

"And you still insist that when you parted among the oaks of the New Forest with Robin Finch, that young man was still alive?"

"Very much alive, and very angry," said Sir Lionel. "And now I suppose, you intend to arrest me?"

"No," Graves admitted at length. "I'll await the arrival of the arrow. Then we'll go into the facts. For the moment, we must leave it at that."

"I understand," nodded Sir Lionel. "Well, I'll be here when you want me."

And he rang for the manservant to usher the detective out.

BUT the machine of Scotland Yard had been set in motion; nothing could stop its inevitable progress. It was all most obvious. Finally, Graves applied for a warrant for the arrest of Sir Lionel Corbin on a charge of murder.

"And it's about time they had arrested him!" he decided suddenly, stabbing the end of his cigarette in the ash-tray.

At the same moment the telephone in his office at Scotland Yard trilled. Graves grabbed the receiver.

"Inspector Graves speaking."

"Sir Lionel is not at home, sir," came the voice from the other end of the wire.

"What—bolted?"

"Not exactly, sir. His manservant says Sir Lionel went out half an hour ago to

dine at the Blue Orange Restaurant, in Soho."

"Well, get after him, you fool," snapped Graves. . . . "Wait a minute, though. Did you say the Blue Orange?"

"Yes sir."

A puzzled expression crossed the face of Graves. "Bring that warrant back here. I'll serve it myself."

"Brown!" he called to the constable at the filing-cabinet. "Where's that impertinent letter asking me to dine at the Blue Orange tonight?"

The constable's hand dived into a folder.

"Here it is, sir. You threw it aside."

"Yes—I took it to be from another of those busybodies who always write suggesting they know more about a murder than we do."

He read the letter again:

Dear Inspector Graves:

Before you come to any rash decision in the New Forest murder case, I suggest you give me the pleasure of your company at dinner at the Blue Orange restaurant at eight p.m. precisely on Monday.

I might be able to help you.

Yours sincerely,

Isaac Heron.

"Queer name, *Isaac Heron*," mused Graves.

"A gypsy name, sir," said Constable Brown. "I used to police the downs at Epsom during Derby week. The Herons are a great gypsy family."

"Gypsy, eh?" said Graves thoughtfully. "What's the time?"

"Ten minutes to eight, sir."

"I've just time to keep that appointment and see Sir Lionel Corbin at the same time. Brown, when they arrive back with that warrant, send them on to me at the Blue Orange."

"At the Blue Orange, sir," nodded Constable Brown to the back of the departing detective. . . .



A gypsy in evening-dress! A keen-featured, mahogany face bowing above a stiff white shirt-front and black garb of a Savile Row cut. This was the extraordinary vision that greeted Graves as he entered the restaurant.

"Glad you came, Inspector."

"Are you Isaac Heron?" asked Graves.

"I am. We were just beginning to despair of your arrival."

"We?"

"But of course. Sir Lionel Corbin is here. You wanted to meet him again, surely?"

The dark eyes of this strange gypsy smiled at Graves. With the pressure of a brown hand upon his arm, Graves was led gently but firmly into that comfortable atmosphere of white napery and soft lights which makes the Blue Orange one of the best restaurants in Soho.

"**H**ERE he is, Sir Lionel. I told you he would come. But of course, you know each other."

The polished gypsy seemed to be stage-managing the *diner à trois*, with an air to the dramatic. Slightly bewildered, the Scotland Yard man found himself seated at the table, a glass of dry sherry at his elbow, and a waiter already bending deferentially to the quiet commands of Isaac Heron.

"Have you really come to arrest me, Inspector?" asked Sir Lionel, smiling.

"It is my duty to warn you—" began Graves, but a brown hand interposed with a deprecating gesture.

"Please, Inspector. Do not spoil this excellent dinner which I have ordered by interposing business. I promise you that by the time the coffee arrives, this unfortunate affair of the murdered man in the New Forest will be settled."

"This is all very irregular," said Graves, gulping his sherry. "Perhaps I may be permitted to ask a question?"

"By all means," said the gypsy, inclining his sleek head.

"Who are you?"

"Yes, I think I should like to know that," added Sir Lionel.

"But you do," protested the gypsy. "I'm Isaac Heron."

"That's just a name," said the Inspector irritably. "A gypsy name."

"Well, I am a gypsy," smiled the mahogany face. "A gypsy who, alas, does not have a caravan and a horse, but an expensive flat in Jermyn Street. I'm in the telephone-book, Inspector, if you care to look me up."

A marvelously cooked *sole meunière* was being served.

"There are some thousands of names in the telephone-book," said Graves.

"True," murmured his host with a smile. "Well, if it amuses you, Inspector, I can tell you that I spent the first eighteen years of my life traveling the gypsy camps of Europe. Then my mother, a famous *dukkerer*, or what you call a fortune-teller, died. . . . My father found me."

"Your father?" asked Sir Lionel.

"Yes, an English aristocrat, of somewhat eccentric habits and considerable fortune. At one time he had become a follower of gypsy camps—a Romany Rye, as they are termed. He loved the smell of wood-smoke, the tang of sweating horses, the freedom of the camp—and in particular, one beautiful gypsy girl: my mother. . . . They were married, in gypsy fashion. I was born."

"Then you are—" began Sir Lionel, a dawning recognition in his eyes.

"Isaac Heron," said the gypsy quickly. "That is my name. Not my father's, I admit. He left me his fortune, a miserable, troublesome inheritance. Before he died, he insisted upon my being educated in the best English fashion. But all the education in the world could not change one drop of my gypsy blood. I'm still a gypsy."

"And you claim to know something of this New Forest affair," said Graves. "How is that?"

The wine waiter was spilling a champagne of excellent vintage into his glass.

"News comes to me from the brothers of the black tents still," nodded the gypsy. "Because of—my advantages, I have been able to help them now and then. And many of them come to me for advice or other assistance when they are in trouble. It was a brother, a *pralo* named Taro, who found the body of that detestable man in the New Forest. A good man, Taro."

"**A**ND what about Robin Finch?" asked the Inspector.

"I said he was a detestable man," nodded Isaac Heron. "And I meant it. I do not think, Inspector, that you have investigated the career of the murdered man as closely as you have been investigating the career of the living."

"What d'you mean?"

"Robin Finch," went on the gypsy, "was one of the worst blackmailers in West End society. I can assure you,

Inspector, that more than one person in Mayfair breathed a sigh of relief when they heard that he was no more."

"But murder is murder!"

"Exactly," nodded the mahogany-faced man. "And Scotland Yard demands an arrest."

"The public demands an arrest."

THE gypsy smiled. Sir Lionel Corbin drank deep from his glass. He realized that within the next few minutes his fate would be decided.

"Your suspicions naturally rest on Sir Lionel," went on the gypsy. "But have you considered, Inspector, the alibis of everyone concerned with that picnic?"

"Of course I have," snapped Graves. "That's routine work. James Dogger and his wife and Cora never left the glade. They waited until the two men had settled their quarrel out of hearing."

"There was the chauffeur."

"Checked him up. He drove the car to the nearest inn, about three miles away, and returned about eleven o'clock to pick up the party as arranged. He never left the inn."

"But there's still another man," insisted the gypsy.

"You mean the chef that the Doggers took out with them from London to cook the dinner?"

"Exactly."

"Well, he was busy cooking the dinner over a wood fire. . . . Let me see—his name was Jules Lavasse."

"It was Jules Lavasse," nodded the gypsy. He turned to the other guest. "You're not eating your lamb cutlet, Sir Lionel. Do try it. You won't find it burnt like that lamb cutlet you had in the New Forest."

Sir Lionel laughed.

"Queer you should mention that, Heron. I remember thinking during that picnic dinner that the Doggers must have picked up a bad chef in London, for the lamb cutlets were burnt."

"No, no," said the gypsy, shaking his head. "You're wrong there, Sir Lionel. Jules Lavasse is a very good chef indeed—one of the best in London. In fact, that lamb chop you are now enjoying has been grilled by Jules Lavasse."

"He's the chef here?" asked Sir Lionel in surprise.

The gypsy nodded. "That is why I asked you to dine with me here this evening," he said quietly.

Graves thought the time had come to intervene.

"All this talk may be interesting to gourmets, Heron, but I don't see what a burnt chop has to do with the murder in the New Forest."

"Everything, Inspector. But finish your dessert. I will call for coffee."

He whispered something to the waiter, who nodded and hurried away.

"I have ventured to send for the chef, Jules Lavasse, to compliment him upon his cooking," said Isaac Heron.

As he spoke, a white-garbed figure wearing the traditional cap of his calling came from the back of the restaurant into the soft lights. He bowed to them.

"Jules," said Heron, "I want to compliment you upon an excellent dinner."

"Monsieur is too kind."

"Not at all, Jules. But—I must also tell you that it is the last meal you will cook at the Blue Orange for a long time."

The Gallic face went white.

"This," went on Heron, "is Inspector Graves of Scotland Yard. He has come to arrest you for the murder of Robin Finch."

Graves, startled, rose from his seat. But the quiet announcement had a staggering effect upon the chef. Rage, fear and eventually resignation swept across his face. Then his head drooped.

"So be it. I am ready, messieurs." He held out his hands, helplessly.

BUT it's not possible," blurted Graves as he watched the white-clad figure disappearing under the escort of the two constables who had been waiting outside with the warrant for Sir Lionel.

"Finch was killed by a first-class archer!" protested Sir Lionel Corbin.

"Jules is a first-class archer, as well as a first-class cook," explained the gypsy. "Sit down, Inspector, and I'll tell you. You naturally believed that archery was the old-fashioned amusement of rich people. Well, so it is in England. But not on the Continent. In France and Belgium, archery is a keen sport among working classes. Our friend Jules was a championship archer in his locale in the Midi. I discovered that yesterday."

"And Jules used my bow and arrow to shoot Cock Robin?" said Sir Lionel.

The gypsy nodded.

"He slunk after both of you as you went quarreling into the forest. When you parted, his chance came. He loosed the arrow as Finch stood near the Rufus Stone. It was silent and effective. He had no need to use a second arrow. But

he had left the mutton chops grilling on the slow fire. When he returned, they were slightly burned. The Doggers had not missed him; they thought he was searching for wood for the fire."

"That all sounds very logical," broke in Graves. "But where's the motive for the murder?"

"A very strong motive," said the gypsy: "Blackmail. I told you in the beginning that Robin Finch was a detestable man. He had found out something about Jules Lavasse, and was bleeding the miserable chef. Jules came to the point of desperation. By chance he was engaged for this picnic by the Doggers. He saw the bow and arrows belonging to Sir Lionel on the ground. The chance was too good to miss. He murdered."

"I MUST admit, Heron," growled Graves, "that you seem to have discovered the murderer for us. But how the devil did you do it?"

"Very simply," said Isaac Heron. "As I have told you, I'm at heart a gypsy; and I have many friends among the brothers of the black tents. Because of my father's position and the money he left me, I have been able to help many of my Romany friends when they got into difficulties. So it happened that when Taro came upon Robin's body, he phoned to me to ask what he should do.

"I questioned him. . . . The footprints he had traced out in the damp earth told part of the story—of two men coming away from the picnic together, followed by a third. He was even pretty sure where the third had stood to loose the fatal arrow.

"I advised Taro to report the matter to the police. And then, fearful that he would be accused of the crime, I went down to the gypsy camps in the New Forest, and gossiped with many of my old Romany friends.

"And at last I found two, a woman and a boy, who had lurked in the shrubbery about the picnickers—hoping, no doubt, to pick up something useful.

"What they had overheard meant nothing to them; but pieced together, it had told the story. For both Robin and the chef had started in surprise when they first caught sight of each other. And Robin had made occasion to stroll over to the cook's fire and snarl out of one side of his mouth:

"Glad to have this chance to remind you: fifty pounds more by tomorrow night, or I turn over that smuggling evidence to the authorities."

"This the gypsy woman had heard. And later the boy had seen the cook leave his fire and follow the two quarrelling men. I won't bore you with the bit of spy work on the part of another *chal* that revealed Jules' skill as an archer. . . . And none of this would be conclusive, but—you observed the poor fellow's demeanor when I accused him?"

"Pretty conclusive, I'll admit," said Graves. "I've a notion he'll not live to be hanged, however. Our examining surgeon has taught me to recognize signs of the heart disease that the poor devil is suffering from. Probably that's one reason he took the chance."

"I can't tell you how grateful I am," said Sir Lionel, holding out his hand to Heron. "Deuced awkward to be accused of murder! I hope I may see more of you."

"I'm hoping the same thing," said Inspector Graves, and there was a gleam of professional eagerness in his voice. This father confessor of the gypsies would certainly be a valuable acquaintance for Scotland Yard.

LATER that night Isaac Heron's devoted manservant Tompkins stood by the kitchen door of the flat in Jermyn Street and wagged his head in resignation. Familiar symptoms told him that tomorrow, and perhaps for some time thereafter, he would be a lonely caretaker in the flat. For Heron, instead of getting into bed, was now pacing up and down the living-room in pajamas and slippers; and his voice was raised in his own version of an ancient song of the open road:

*O, saddle to me my milk-white steed,
Go and fetch me my pony, O!
That I may ride and seek my bride,
Who is gone with the wraggle-taggle
gypsies, O!*

*What care I for my houses and land?
What care I for my money, O!
For tomorrow I ride to seek my bride,
Who is gone with the wraggle-taggle
gypsies, O!*

*What care I for a goose-feather bed,
With the sheet turn'd down so bravely, O!
For tonight I shall sleep in a cold open
field,
Along with the wraggle-taggle gypsies, O!*

"Gypsy Blood," and other exploits of one of the most interesting detectives in all fiction, will appear in forthcoming issues.



Maid of the Moon

By KINGSLEY MOSES

Illustrated by Paul De Leslie

A WHOLE gale from the west was harrying the beach. The wind, unremittingly savage, drove the waves slantwise along the shore.

There had been no sun throughout the day, so that it was all but full dark now at four o'clock in the afternoon when the chief's watch ended in the radio compass shack; yet the chief himself still sat at the big wheel they call the "loop," twirling it gently with his left hand as he scribbled out figures with his right. "Here's a new one, Harry," he remarked to his assistant, First-class Radio Man Rawle.

Rawle listened to the high whine, running off to a complete fade-out. "Two-forty he bears from here: nigh west sou'west. But his name don't make sense. Did you give him QRA?"

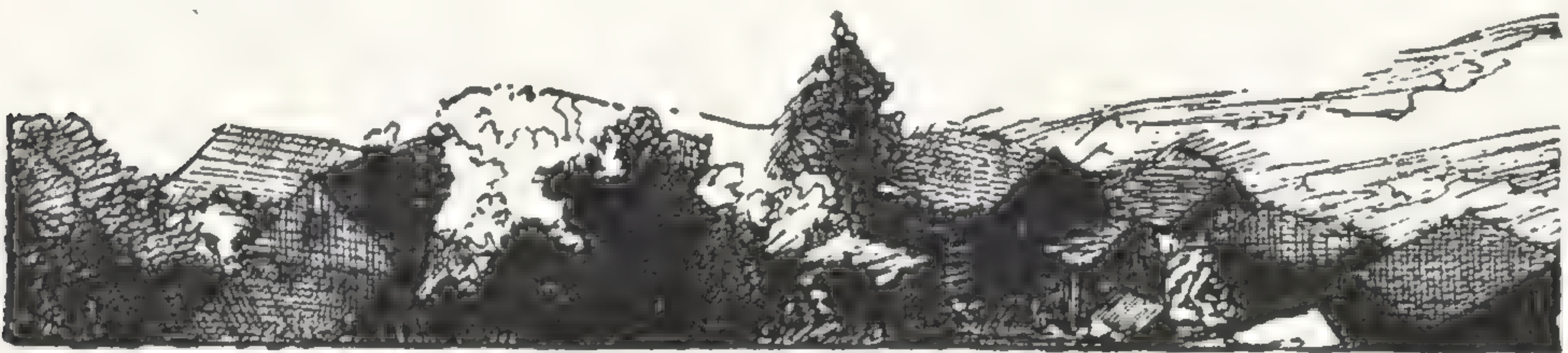
The chief nodded: "Have. No better. See what you get." He shucked his earphones, rose and went to the window as his relief took the padded armchair by the wheel of the loop. The call whined in again.

"Two-forty is right." Rawle spun the loop to the minima, the complete fade-out point. "That is sure his bearing. But who he is—"

"Yeah, no signal I can savvy. Give him what he's asking for, and get along to the others. There'll be plenty of 'em tonight fumbling round out there. A cruel sea's making." . . .

For twenty years the life of Oscar Eld, Chief Radio Man, United States Navy, had been absorbed by two interests. These had occupied him entirely:

There was his profession—coldly, practically scientific—and as intangible as the ether through which the messages came. Five or six hundred miles to sea, a ship's wireless-operator pressed on a button. Oscar Eld, here at Surfside, heard that signal, loud or dim; and by no more than revolving the wheel of his loop, was able to determine precisely from what direction that message came. Back then would go his answer: 90 for east, 180 for due south—as might be. Other stations too got the call. Their



We can see only our side of the moon. What of its this extraordinary story of Radio-operator Eld, by



other hemisphere? Consider, from this viewpoint, the gifted author of "Deep Four" and "Stumblebum."

answers were as accurate. For the master of any vessel then, whether in night or fog or storm, it was the simplest matter to find his position upon the waste of the ocean: where the lines drawn out from two land stations intersected upon his chart, there, on the ocean, he must be.

Chief Petty Officer Eld had seen this marvel gradually reach precise perfection. He had been a radio man long years. This was his present.

And out of the bitterness of his past he was well fitted to know how much this miracle of man's science must mean to the mariner. For it was partly in his past—as if he had been incarnated twice—that Oscar Eld still dwelt.

ON this very shore, twenty years ago, his own small freighter had beached herself. He had been Captain Eld then, out of Tonsberg for Baltimore, in the Norwegian-American merchant service. The wreck had been no fault of his: a footless engineer, a cracked shaft, no steerage-way; and a hurricane sweeping from the sea.

Somehow the shipwrecked master had fought his way ashore, with his bride, the tall blonde Norse girl, gripped within his left arm. They had been engulfed and whirled and slung about by the icy water; together they had been pounded upon the shoals till the furious surge finally loosed them and spewed them out upon the land. It was in the drear dark before dawn.

Eld must have lost consciousness then. He had managed to drag his wife clear of even the last rip of the tide and sucking grasp of the undertow before he stumbled and dropped exhausted.

His next sensed perception was of one bright, single star upon the paling eastern rim of the sea. Morning was coming cloudless. Yet that low star, the planet Mercury, was suddenly blanked out: not merely fading in the opalescent glow of the clear cold morning's dawn, but sharply hidden from his sight. An old, wan moon had caught it. Conjunction of the Moon and Mercury—he remembered the note in his ephemeris.

A strange phenomenon to note. "But it means that strength and consciousness is mine again," he had said. He could drag his wife Deborah to shelter, warmth, life, now. But when he lifted her, she was stiffly dead. . . .

There had been two or three rotten bad years after that. He had been all but a vagrant. War brought him back

to self-respect. He had a natural aptitude for wireless; there was in it the essence of the unfathomable which appealed to a mystic Norse strain. Thus he had remained in the Navy, rising easily to the stripes of a chief. Luck sent him back to a tour at Surfside. . . .

This night he did not turn in immediately after his self-cooked supper, as was his usual habit. He rated a comfortable three-room cottage of his own, set back scarcely five yards from the radio compass station itself. His relief on the night watch had only to raise a window to call to waken him.

Of the three rooms the cottage included, Eld used regularly only the bedroom and kitchen. The front room was a parlor; a stiff, neat place where he went little; rarely indeed more than the twice a day when he knelt on the bare floor beneath his wife's picture. Opposite the picture was his marriage-certificate, ornately framed.

He cooked his own meals and tidied up the kitchen. He read and smoked—often till very late—in bed. Beside the back door of the kitchen, on the stoop, he had contrived to build himself a cold shower-bath. His habits were neat as a cat's.

Supper did not stir his interest tonight, though. In the intervals between the urgent calls from out of the dark Atlantic, Eld queried his neighbor stations: Amagansett, Cape Cod, Nova Scotia. Every one of them had got the strange call, as unintelligible to them as to Surfside. Nor had one of them got an understandable answer to their QRA—"Who are you?"—or QRD—"Whither are you bound?"

Easy enough, of course, to check and identify the spot from which the strange call had come: Amagansett gave nine-zero; two-one-zero was reported from Cape Cod; the others corresponded—all agreed on that. Between Nantucket and Block Island that would be—twenty miles to southward, about. Much too close for any deep-craft vessel, what with Nantucket Shoals running off for forty miles in that direction.

ALL evening long, Eld hung about the station, anticipating the distress-call, waiting to notify the Coast Guard. There was no further signal, save those of the routine duty's run—Canadians, British, a French liner, our own journeyman coastwise craft. "Bum might've sent TKS—thanks!" Eld held to prim naval



courtesy. "Now he's slipped across the shoals, likely, and already rounded the Cape!" He went to bed.

He was up before the sun, though, by six o'clock at that season of the year. A bitter, brilliant morning, with the sea violet-black. The storm had rushed along; but the waves roared as Eld walked to the tide's rim; and a huge spar twenty feet long was worried and tossed by the breakers. On just such a morning twenty years ago. . . . He shook his head.

Withal, he was professionally curious about the surf-slung spar. If there had been a catastrophe in the night, there might be an overturned boat, oars, lifebelts, grimmer objects, awash out there.

Something strange there surely was. Bright fragments like silvered filaments glittered out yonder on the smoother swell, perhaps a hundred fathoms distant. The rays of the rising sun caught that strange flotsam and glinted from it.

It was not the wreckage of a wooden vessel, nor of an iron one either. The bright-spun filaments were coiled and streamed away like tangled wires. But tangled wires do not float. Eld's practical mind conceived some alien, unknown wireless outfit, some peculiarly new and elaborate apparatus still buoyed by a section of deckhouse maybe. He moved eastward along the empty beach to keep pace with the silvered stuff's drift. . . .

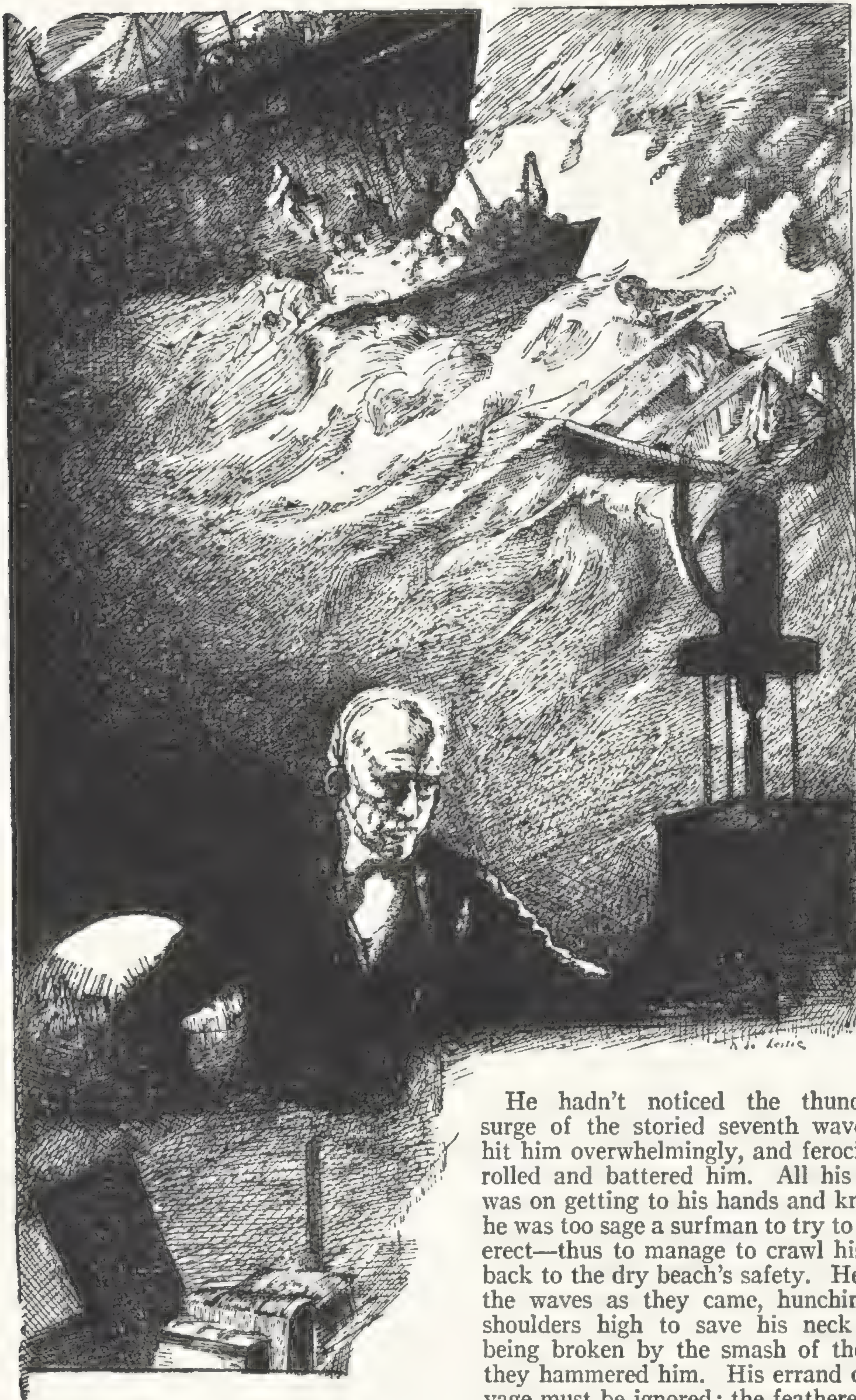
Tough slogging, through the fine sand; and cold for that latitude—not more than twenty. His routine consciousness told him he would be late for his trick at the station. No matter: Rawle, surly as he was, would mechanically carry on. A good man, Rawle, in many ways—though his virago wife Rosie wasn't helping him any; of course the man did drink.

Perversely, the strange flotsam refused to come ashore. The surf on the nearest bar would catch it and whirl it almost to the beach's slope, where the undertow would seize and suck it out again. Three times Eld dashed in knee-deep to try to grab a bit of the metallic-looking stuff, only to have it snatched away from him by a hissing, onrushing swirl of foam. He looked at his watch. Seven-thirty. More than two miles from the station; the only way back through the heaviest sand. Yeah, he'd be late enough, all right. Give up this fool errand. Wires! Likely he'd chase them clear to Tom Nevers' Head; and then stand like a dummy and watch them start off across the open Atlantic. He turned homeward, then stopped.

Another object, more puzzling yet, was tossed on a wave's crest. Dead bird: pure white, snowier than the foam itself! But what bird that size? Eagle, albatross—not white—not so large, either.

ELD determinedly went after it. For all his fifty years, he was ruggedly vigorous. He would often swim naked in a sea into which no one else would venture. He came near to having to swim now, in boots and pea-jacket; for the smash of the waves on his body, the sucking of their retreat down the steep shelf, toppled him and tripped him and nearly dragged him out of his depth. The sluggishly floating feather thing seemed alive to elude his grasp.

Yet he did get hold of it at last. Legs wide while the tow wrenched at them and the curling combers buffeted his body, he did manage to snatch at the white pinions and drag the fantastic object up to his sight: A garment, a coat, a suit of feathers—white and light as swans-down, all but translucent. . . .



Out of the bitterness of the past Eld knew how much this miracle of science must mean to the mariner—for on this very shore, twenty years ago, his own freighter had beached herself.

He hadn't noticed the thundering surge of the storied seventh wave. It hit him overwhelmingly, and ferociously rolled and battered him. All his mind was on getting to his hands and knees—he was too sage a surfer to try to stand erect—thus to manage to crawl his way back to the dry beach's safety. He took the waves as they came, hunching his shoulders high to save his neck from being broken by the smash of them as they hammered him. His errand of salvage must be ignored: the feathered suit had vanished when he had at last edged his way flatly to the higher sand. "You dumb fool!" he growled at himself. "If you'd only held a piece of it—" A wisp of white down still stuck to his fingers.

Familiar enough with the plumage of native birds, Eld could not identify this fragile fragment definitely. He recognized it as of the variety known as filoplume, the softest of feathers. Most of all it resembled the down of the arctic eider duck, rare in this latitude indeed, but easily identified by anyone familiar with Norway and Iceland. That was tangible evidence to study at leisure. The vanished apparel had, in fact, existed. Moreover, beyond the surf-line, the coruscating tangle of metal still glinted upon the surface of the black swells. That strange flotsam would no doubt ultimately come ashore too. . . .

The carefully treasured bit of plumage was not, a resident naturalist pronounced, eiderdown. Dr. Ernest mumbled about epidermal outgrowths, rachis, hamuli and quill; but the scape or shaft of this feather was more minutely threadlike than anything the naturalist had known. Gruffly he judged: "No such animal."

"Then," said Eld, "where did it come from?"

The additionally irritating circumstance that no solid mass of the bright metal wreckage ever did come ashore made the mystery yet more obscure. Away down eastward along the beach where it reasonably should have drifted, Rawle and Mrs. Rawle and two little boys of the neighborhood all picked up glittering filaments—a heap of perhaps a handful in all. These were ultimately pronounced to be specimens of tantalum—only, as the scientists pointed out, they couldn't be tantalum, of course: too rare a metal. Dr. Ernest and several amateur authorities too became visibly annoyed with Oscar Eld. Awkward to have to admit ignorance!

SO there remained of the mysterious call from the night just this: a heap of metal—which couldn't be such a metal at all; a wisp of feather—not admitted to be feather by anyone; an uncoded cry from the dark.

That, more than the evidence you could touch and see, made the profoundest impression upon Oscar Eld. For he had methodically checked and re-checked the call as it had been received by his neighboring stations too. One-ninety from Portland, Maine; two-ten from Bar Harbor; one-four-two from the Rhode Island station at Price's Neck. They all agreed. Six veteran navy operators at six widely separated posts were not all having simultaneous hallucinations.

There followed the trouble with the shower-bath. . . .

Handy with tools himself, Eld had installed his own plumbing. He was adept at far more intricate jobs. But for all that, and in vain, he wasted puzzled hours trying to find a loose joint or washer. In the end he just grunted in disgust and let it go.

For almost daily, toward noon, at the hour when most calls came crowding in, there would come the quick hiss of rushing needles of water, the splash of the cataract's hitting the board floor.

First-class Radio Man Rawle had volunteered to turn off the erratic flood the first time it had occurred—twenty ships at once were that day clamoring at Surf-side for their bearings.

"Left it loose?" Oscar Eld murmured as he tap-tapped with his left hand, while the pencil in his right scribbled ranks of notations.

"That's the hell of it, Chief; it wasn't just loose. It was shoved wide open."

THIS went on until Eld became sure that he was being deliberately pestered. It would be some of the young hoodlums of the shack colony adjacent. There were not in all more than a dozen of the ragged kids—ought to be easy to catch them at it. On the brightest, sunniest day of that unusually bright January, Eld set himself to watch. He could be spared for an hour or so; with this clear sun and sharp horizon, only the dullest master would be calling for shore signals today.

Eld took up his post beneath his bedroom window, directly around the corner from the shower-bath on the back stoop. Three strides would whisk him around to the swinging canvas curtain. An urchin lurking beneath the cottage, which was built up on piers two or three feet above the sand, might descry the radio man's legs as he sat there, and so be deterred from his mischievous purpose. Twelve chimed; and Eld relaxed to light his pipe. Sure, some kid had spied him and given over his prank for the day.

One bell. He would go in and take up his own watch. . . .

Suddenly water gushed in the shower.

Eld whipped himself around the corner. The bath's curtain swung gently as if some one were moving within. The water whished and spattered. "I got you, you little pup!" He slung back the curtain. It was streaked and dripping wet. But there was no one there.

The water continued to gush. Ignoring a wetting in his vexation, Eld shoved in his arm to turn it off. Yes, the lever had been thrown clear over. That had been no mere slip. The bath had been deliberately turned on. How?

By nature stubborn, with the scientific man's pertinacity in pursuing the unexplained, Eld shifted his own hours of watch to late afternoon and evening. This put Rawle on during the day: an arrangement which suited the assistant but brought violent protest from Rosie Rawle, the man's sloppy vixenish wife.

"It's just givin' Harry the chance to sneak off to town and spend all his money on 'shine again, Mr. Eld!" she said.

To a man inclined to be incurious, so trifling an inconvenience as a leaky shower-bath might have been of small moment. But Oscar Eld took it hard. He puzzled about it through the evening hours, often missed a ship's first call. "This damn' thing's getting my goat!" He caught himself sending a QRA to a coastwise tramp he knew as well as the revenue cutter. "It's the damn' sinus thing again—" He'd not been bothered with that pain between the eyes for years now. A curse to have it return!

PERHAPS he dozed. Yet surely he had felt the fingers. Ever so softly, they had run down over his eyebrows, then slipped outward across the closed lids of his eyes. Sure—of course—he had dozed: his eyelids had been shut. And dreamed! Naturally; it'd be that way. For that touch had been Deborah's gentle gesture; Deborah, his wife, gone these twenty years.

In the foggy northern seas the sinus had often been cruelly bad. Doctors and medicine hadn't served. But the woman's loving touch, light as a butterfly's wing—how often that had helped him. Dreaming? Sure—sure! But that pain was sliding away just as it used to. Dreaming? Earphones clamped on, he swung around abruptly to search the radio-room. Empty, of course. . . .

Petty, pestering annoyances multiplied to perplex him. Dillon, second-class radio man, was stupid as could be; Harry Rawle too often showed evidence of a night out; Mrs. Rawle sulked and alternately shrieked and mewed at her husband: twice a week she threatened to leave him. Good riddance, was Eld's private opinion; but it was not the thought for a responsible officer to ex-

press. There continued, less frequently, true, but intermittently, the erratic misbehavior of the shower-bath. To this presently was added the small circumstance of steady pilfering of his food.

ELD liked to cook for himself—preferred it, though a frugal man who ate little but meat, eggs and milk. Opposite the shower-bath on his back stoop was his icebox, never heretofore locked. That precaution became necessary when often a whole quart of milk or half a dozen eggs were not where they had been deposited the night before. Then less perishable victuals, cereals and jams kept in the kitchen, would disappear. And twice the icebox padlock was deftly picked. Vigilance did not serve. What harum-scarum brat could pick a lock, anyway! "Am I goin' cuckoo? Do I walk—and eat—in my sleep? Do I only *think* I hear the shower-bath? *Imagine* I feel the floor wet—and the curtain?"

At eight o'clock one evening, Rosie Rawle came slamming into the station.

"The low-down dirty bum!" She was in a soiled pink wrapper, clutched together by gripping fists—stockingless, but wearing high-heeled, scuffed white suède shoes. "He's gone off to town again. To one of them Brava balls, I'll bet. I'm quittin' him, Mr. Eld! I'm—"

"Well—quit!" There was a call in from an Australian freighter—fellow didn't seem to be able to box a compass.

"You say quit! Quit! Well, damn all you men! You're always stickin' together! But I want to tell you, Oscar—high-an'-mighty-Eld—we women've got some rights. We—"

"Beat it, before I have to put you out." A fierce pulse throbbed through his forehead.

"Put me out, will you! Well, you can go to the devil! I'm beating it by the morning boat, Mister. But you be careful to send Harry's check to me at Fall River, care o' my sister—"

She recoiled from the chief's hard blue eyes. Her tone shifted to a whine. "A man's gotta support his wife, y'know. It's the law. I seen Judge Fitz—"

"Write me a letter about it."

"An' have Harry cash his check and spend it on—"

"He'll not cash the check. Now get out of here."

Just one more curse. She wouldn't go off the island, of course. Had to have a man to drag on. But she could demand support, all right. Next morn-

ing he made Rawle endorse his check over, and with Dillon as a witness, had the harassed husband pay out in cash to Rosie enough money for their food and coal and a little over for clothing for her—she'd have continued to clamor otherwise. Rawle, jittery, didn't protest much. Anything for peace this morning.

For a whole week the Rawles quarreled only in the sanctity of their own quarters. As soon as might be, Eld determined, he would get Rawle transferred. A good man once—

FEBRUARY upon that New England island lying so far out to sea was more than usually severe. Day after day, though the sun shone vividly as it arched up into the heavens, the cold held below the freezing-point.

For all that his head continued vexatious, and the minor phenomenal annoyances of the running shower, the purloined victuals, the recurrent fancy of his dead wife's touch were inescapable reminders that he lived in a not too sane current of thought—in spite of it all, Eld managed to regain some of his habit of accustomed routine. He took over his own proper watch once more, governed Rawle firmly but understandingly, paid Rosie her dole and kept her muzzled with the promise of a hostile report against her if she became too termagant: settled back into what he hoped would be the commonplaces of his actually most uncommon vocation.

It had long been his habit—as on the morning of the discovery of the glittering flotsam and unidentified filoplume—to idle along the dunes for an hour between the rise of the sun and his hour of return to duty. Today with the glare of the winter sun full in his eyes, his thought, as well as his vision was, he had to believe with a start, somewhat dazzled. For surely, right there on the open beach, a naked girl was lying!

Astounded, he did not move. The mercury in the thermometer had not yet climbed to thirty when he left the radio compass station. In such biting weather a girl—unclothed—stark—

But was it a girl? Was it anyone?

In the moment of his first glimpse he would have sworn so. In line and shape she was distinct enough—long, graceful legs to pointed breasts; her arms thrown over her head in sinuous relaxation.

Yes, in line and shape. But in coloring—she had no hue of life at all. Her



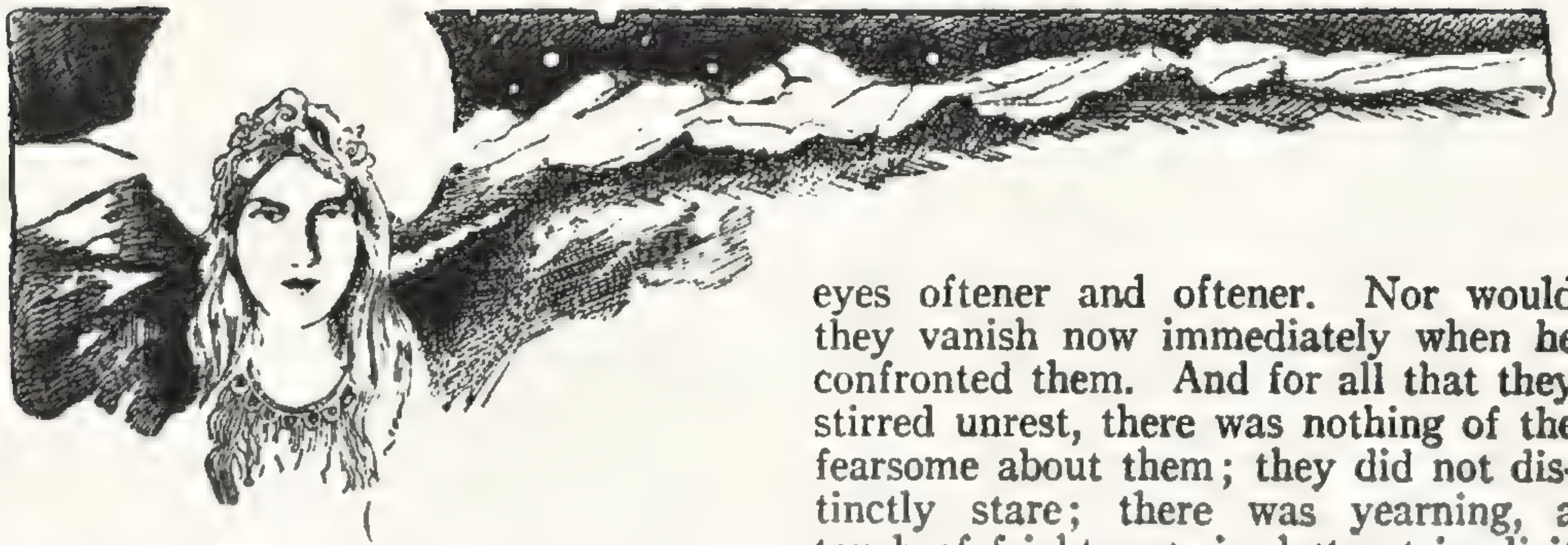
body, as he stared there from the dune above and behind her, was almost as translucent as water. Yet the smooth flow of her outline was sharp enough. Was it? His eyes, his head, suddenly hurt him acutely. He felt dizzy and faint, as though stricken by the pale heat of the sun. His hand rose to press his forehead. . . . Now she was no longer to be perceived.

At the spot where she had lain there was, so far as eyes might distinguish, nothing. Pale shells of periwinkle and scallop, pink and lavender and white; a few dun pebbles and scattered crystalline specks of sand. Nothing more.

He tried to identify the imprint of the body's impression. The sand was dry, crisp as sugar, harshly cold to the touch, but not visibly, definitely disturbed. Would there be a mark on such a surface? He glanced back at his own pattern of footprints: the sharply scudding west wind had already whirled loose sand to blur them.

Indeed time to see a doctor. . . .

Dr. Drew must be caught in his hours though. At two in the afternoon, with the peak of the rush of calls past, Oscar Eld called Rawle in relief. He would spell his assistant in turn for the four-to-six shift. "A slight sinus infection—chronic—apply heat." As much as the physician could help, that. Eld wondered if it wouldn't have been better to tell his whole tale, right through without reservation: for deliberately he had not mentioned either this morning's vision, nor even one other of the perhaps-associated phenomena. He had come, you see, to assume a connection between all these fantastic goings-on: the steady



theft of food, withal in moderate quantities; the gushing of the shower-bath; the half-felt touch of cool hands. They all tied up together.

But to tell a general practitioner in a gossip little town—hum! “Chief Radio Man Eld, to Newport Naval Hospital, for observation and treatment.” No, he’d risk no such order.

That was paramount in his mind as he took over the key and loop in the twilight. And his head still hurt: his hand brushed and tapped at his forehead. From his pocket he pulled his small metal mirror to see what his eyes revealed, whether clear, milky or blood-shot.

But—there were other eyes than his own reflected from the bright-polished steel: dark eyes like purple iris.

Eld gasped and swung around. But beyond the circle of vivid illumination beneath the cone of the tin reflector the radio compass room was in deep shadow. The rising wind wailed, crying: there was gentle laughter in the crying too. . . .

Rawle came back at six. His arms were full of groceries, which he dropped on the front step outside the station. He growled something about having to go home and cook his own supper, and Rosie’s too, “and likely as not redd up after that: she’ll be out again gadding and gossiping.” Eld told him to take his time. Wives—what a vast difference there could be in ’em!

AS the days and the nights marched along: duty, supper, sleep, duty—Eld was increasingly aware that he was no longer alone in his own cottage. There were stretches of time even by day too when he sensed the presence of another in the radio compass office; and more than once he would swing in his chair to hail Dillon or Rawle, and find that neither had entered.

And he glimpsed, or fancied he glimpsed, those dark, disembodied iris

eyes oftener and oftener. Nor would they vanish now immediately when he confronted them. And for all that they stirred unrest, there was nothing of the fearsome about them; they did not distinctly stare; there was yearning, a touch of fright or pain, but yet implicit in their expression a certain tenderness. He came to look for them regularly; and also for that now distinctly sensed touch of hands, soothing his head’s distress.

It may be that the long experience Oscar Eld had had with the invisible, intangible, imponderable marvel of radio, the familiar handling of ether-waves, neither heard, seen nor even guessed at of themselves until caught and translated into intelligible syllables by man’s apt ingenuity, partially explained the inexplicable. Or it may be that the Swedenborgian capacity to reconcile the natural with the spiritual somewhat dulled Oscar Eld’s critically scientific conscience and half-persuaded him to believe that he was veritably neither invalid nor insane: at least, over and over again, he sought to reassure himself by articulated reiteration that he was neither sick nor mad. Indeed, instead, he knew that he harbored in very fact a sharp sense of excited expectation: a taste of delight in the shadow of his apprehension; there was constant, whether waking or dreaming or routinely working, a promise of the possible vision of beauty.

Contrariwise, it was perhaps a Calvinistic tendency which forbade him to essay to track down that material and earthly representation of beauty which he believed that his eyes had glimpsed. He preferred stubbornly to attempt to persuade himself that there really had been nothing mystic or magical in that enchanting vision, that the naked girl on the beach had been just another, harder, more brazen, of those “fool summer folks.” Fads and follies enough there were these days, what with this nutty Nudism you read about, and the crazy kids who pretended to belong to outdoor dancing schools and shamelessly haunted Tom Nevers’ Head summer afternoons without a single stitch to their backs; and grown-up men and women who should have known better, diving into the bay in midwinter—Brownies, polar

bears, the idiots called themselves. But as for catching this girl herself at it again—Eld had no prurient curiosity: a naked girl was just naked.

IT was, therefore, accident when he did come upon her again. Nor this time could he convince himself that it was his eyes which deceived him.

For she was real enough, and vitally visible enough now; from blonde, pale platinum waving hair, down all her graceful length to the curved arches of her slim narrow feet as, ankles crossed, arms upthrown and clasped behind her head, she lay upon the shelving sand. Not only the line of her was sharply distinct, but there was entirely perceptible the flush of life, ever so faintly pink through the pale amber of the flesh.

This time she saw him too. The dark eyes, which—he had thought in his imagination—he had come to know so well, now lingered deliberately upon him, searchingly, for a full second. Then, with one complete, single swing upward, she had sprung to her feet and was gone.

Yet there were distinct slender footprints by the bluff sand dune; thence on, prints of the toes and ball of the foot only. A girl running, naught else. And running and dodging too fast for a heavy-booted beach-man to follow.

The puzzlement of this abrupt materialization did provoke a headache in earnest. By noon indeed, racking the thing through and through his brain, Eld was too exhausted to do his work well. He had to summon Rawle, who arrived grumbling and growling as usual about his married lot. "Only for an hour, boy," his chief assured him. "A slug of aspirin and an hour's sleep—"

In his bedroom where the shades were drawn to bar out the harsh noontide sunlight, he did not instantly, however, stretch himself prone. Almost fussily tidy, he was annoyed to notice that a single sheet of paper from his bedside scratch-pad had slipped onto the floor. The puzzle of a recent neap tide had occupied him the previous evening. But he had put his papers away neatly!

This sheet was scrawled over with notations—Arabic numbers, to be sure, oddly shaped though they might be. But in what weird system of mathematics?

Rather pleasedly perplexed and curious, he sat down on the edge of the bed, dim light and headache ignored as he tried to fathom the strange figures. He was apt at ciphers and codes, numerical

abracadabra of any sort. Quick enough of wit, it did not take him long to deduce that this system of figuring was on a base of 64, instead of the conventional 100. Who'd devise that now? Silly! Not quite, after all: 64 is divisible six times before entering decimals; 100 only twice. Moreover this bizarre solution was a fourth decimal point more accurate than his own. Rawle? Never! That chump didn't know a sine from a sand flea.

Puzzled, vexed, just a trifle alarmed,—one must be eternally vigilant about wreckers and smugglers at such a station,—Oscar Eld paced his quarters, out into the bright kitchen, back into the shadowy bedroom. One riddle after another: was it that way men went dotty? Aspirin: he slugged it into himself. The desire for sleep crept up on him. He turned to throw himself on the three-quarter bed, to bury his hot head in the three neatly piled pillows.

Neatly piled? He had not noticed before, but two pillows were crushed and rumpled. Now, who the devil had done that? Instinctively he seized at them to pat them into proper shape.

As though something caught them, they did not come easily to his jerking pull. . . . Abruptly, then, they did come free. Sharply the bed-springs creaked. Eld felt something slip past him.

A shadow—no more than a shadow—fled by the bright oblong of the open kitchen door. And the outer door from the kitchen which gave onto the back stoop unmistakably swayed open and shut again.

ELD did not attempt pursuit, but just dropped down upon the bed's edge, elbows jammed on knees. His knuckles kneaded his throbbing temples. What now? But he did have wit enough to brush one hand back to the bed's inner edge by the wall. There the coverlet was still warm to the touch. . . .

Surreptitiously for several days thereafter Eld scouted through the stacks of the antiquated town library, thumbing every volume he could find which dwelt on mental sickness, psychology, insanity. Yet surely he was not insane: the evidence of sight and touch, more vaguely also of hearing: they couldn't be confuted. Had he grown derelict to duty, lax, slovenly, irresponsible? Mentally he catechized himself upon the conduct of both his private and official affairs. Painstakingly critical, he could yet find

no fault there. In all other respects, save this one thing, he was quite routinely normal. If he could only talk to some one! Huh—out of the question: the Navy does not approve of old C.P.O.'s with delusions.

Yet surely and relentlessly, just the same, his obsession seemed to grow upon him. He could not flinch that. For although he found no more scraps of scribbling, and he had so securely guarded his provisions that there could be no more petty thefts, he did hear complaints of pilfering from the fishermen's shacks roundabout; and though there was no sudden flooding from the shower-bath again, the consciousness of the invisible companion persisted unremittingly: an occasional almost indisputable glimpse of the iridescence of a nacre-white figure, an impression equivalent to certainty of the dark, lucent eyes.

Eld had to recognize that his own personality also was being subtly, gradually transmuted. The presence,—the ghost, whatever it was,—had come to monopolize his interest. No morning but that he woke expectant, alert, wondering what new development might be. Evenings when he returned to his rooms he discovered that he had a habit of stealth now: he was eager to surprise—whom, what?

He constrained himself to say whom, what, for all that he knew perfectly well that it was—*her*. Waking by night, he knew himself—for the first time in long years—awaredly alone.

THE long Navy department envelope—but with a postage stamp in its corner—naturally caught his notice when at twilight the mail came in. Navy business travels under the frank; but on the back flap of this envelope was Charles Kennedy's name: "*Lt. Cmdr. U.S.N.*"

Oscar Eld had not heard from Charles personally for a year or two. It was one of those old and stanch masculine friendships which oddly endure like, say, a cactus growth, without visible nourishment, for an indefinite span of time. Charles Kennedy before entering Annapolis had been the runaway son of a well-to-do broker, shipped as an apprentice seaman in Captain Eld's tramp. The twenty-five years and the two and a half stripes had not dimmed the naval officer's esteem for his old master.

Therefore he wrote now in half-jeering, half-affectionate tone:

Dear Skipper:

Your enclosure is interesting, and doubtless, to you, important. But unless I had chanced to intercept it, I am afraid some sappy superior of ours would have suggested examining your head.

You ought to know by this time that a C.P.O. of your service and value does not need officially to announce the fact of his marriage. He puts in for an increased allowance and lets the taxpayers worry about that.

Your mooning, under the circumstances, is understandable though. My heartiest congratulations, dear old chief; and my sincerest respects to Mrs. Eld—whatever her first name may be.

And here's your precious contract back.

Charles.

A signed marriage-certificate fell out upon the desk. It testified to the legal jointure of Oscar Eld and—the other writing was wholly illegible. Yet there was something in the chirography, the formation of the characters of that other name, something strangely familiar.

Eld had rather painstakingly preserved the oddly cabalistic characters of the unexplained lunar calculation. Compared with this illegible signature on that space of the marriage-certificate which vaguely showed an erasure—Yes, it was the same hand.

And in the parlor of his own cottage where his marriage-certificate had so long hung, the ornate frame now was empty!

Rawle shouted across from the station to ask advice on some signal—but his question went unanswered.

The match Oscar Eld had struck to reveal the empty frame burned out in his inert fingers. The room, enclosed by the stormy night, was utterly dark. Eld stood alone there a long while. . . . Unheated, the room was stark chill; but only gradually he sensed in his own flesh the cold of the damp darkness. It was no more than his skin, it seemed to him, the mere surface of his flesh which was touched, for within him, heartening, sustaining, was a sentient warmth of comfort, content, peace. He neither saw nor heard motion; but he did indeed feel that slim fingers closed and gently caressed his eyelids.

WHEN presently he went to bed, he was not surprised to find he was not alone there—though with his eyes he did not perceive his wife till dawn splashed the sky with turquoise. . . .

More difficult by far than the *rapprochement* between individuals of an entirely different race, the progress of communication, explanation, knowledge between wife and husband was yet astonishingly swift. It was not that Eld taught her an earth language; it was her swift wit and apperception which versed him in the method of converse upon the Moon.

For from the Moon she had arrived.

MAN has seen but one face of that strange, once-terrestrial satellite. Beyond the dark edge exists life—this was her explanation. The human folk of the Moon, pale and almost unpigmented, are yet in form and feature substantially like earth creatures. In their own manner they too have developed mathematics, have surpassed us in several of the useful sciences.

An airplane flight from the Moon, a matter of just three weeks in machines we already wot of, has long been quite conceivable. This now had been done. There were the fragmentary filaments of the metal like tantalum to prove it—and to prove how much greater advance the Moon's engineers have made in construction.

Only the failure of the essence which had propelled the Moon-manufactured motor accounted for the aviatrix's mishap. Her subtle and swiftly sure mind had easily interpreted the signals which had been sent her that winter night weeks since. Schooled to an entirely different system of notation, it was yet easy to coördinate signals from several different quarters: Long Island and Rhode Island, Nantucket and Maine. She had headed for Surfside.

But in her life-experience there had been no such thing as the sea. A wide, apparently smooth, dark landing-field—the black lava airdromes of the Moon: well, they would be like that. A secure-enough landing-field for a pilot little familiar with the Earth's relatively immense gravitational pull. The meager water caught up from the atmosphere is a precious commodity to Moonfolk.

So, to be engulfed in the harsh element, in the stormy waves of winter—

It had not been the cold which had been cruel. Moonfolk know a mean temperature very little above Earth's freezing point. The winter sea would be balmy enough. But the knack of swimming in a rough ocean—while swimming is a natural enough reaction to humans who have never been cramped by

fear—is surely an achievement hard to come by when swathed in a snowy, featherlike flying-suit. So, naked she had made the beach that night, only after a most fearful struggle. And naked she must face a strange world.

This she had been too exhausted to attempt until a whole day of sleep had refreshed her—too shy to venture until growing, human hunger threatened her strength. Daring in desperation, at last she had timidly approached the radio compass station, had seen the dark, strange, blood-flushed humans and attempted to signal to them. At first she thought Earth's people blind: she could not know that her own paleness was all but translucently invisible to the eye of these fellow-beings. For one of her literally unearthly intelligence, however, the answer soon came readily.

Clothing she did not essentially require, save only to satisfy a vague instinct of modesty. The rigor of a winter night on this southern New England beach was nothing worse than her native average climate. Invisible, soft-footed, agile, she could help herself at will to such meager rations as she was accustomed to. Instinctively too she adopted Oscar Eld as her unwitting benefactor. At first glimpse of him confidence and interest—and more—had been oddly awakened. She had made her bed habitually beneath the piers of his cottage, helped herself to what she needed; and did not find her wit and ingenuity thwarted by the simplicity of Earth-made locks.

ONLY the unwonted warmth of the sun of these winter days led her into her first betraying step. A sun's heat which on a January noon will drive the mercury well up to sixty was all but intolerable to her delicate flesh. The cataract of the icy shower-bath was grateful relief. That, and plunging into the dreaded sea whenever she could summon courage enough, served to keep her comfortable. She was, in a sense, happy. The radio chief, for all the obvious discrepancy in their ages, had an overpowering fascination for her. She had not hesitated to linger in his presence, to watch him surreptitiously, even to venture to touch and try to comfort him when he was visibly in pain. She would have been quite content to allow affairs to run on as they were indefinitely. Even the higher arching sun—a phenomenon which not only could she understand, but

the azimuths of which she could estimate with amazing accuracy—seemed no longer quite so insufferable. She was intelligent enough to realize that ever so slowly, insensibly, she was becoming acclimated to this strange planet she had so recklessly pioneered.

But she did not reckon the effect of the sun upon her own pale body. Not until that morning when Eld had startlingly, certainly seen her stark beauty amid the dunes, did she comprehend that her pale translucence must gradually have been lost; that the touch of the sun had burned her skin to a hue perceptible to mortal vision. Naked to his eyes, she would be naked to all men.

For a time she was horribly afraid. She lurked amid the dunes and among the reeds of the mallows in the swamps quite as timid and wary as the gray fawn which she often spied coming down to drink from the inland pools at day-break.

Too often, from her vantage of invisibility, she had been a horrified witness to the callous brutality of the shanty dwellers, the coarseness of their brawls, the crass mauling of women and children. Particularly she had observed Rawle's fits of drunkenness and Rosie Rawle's screaming tempers. Was this the habit of all humans?

BUT she had picked up one instructive Earth-way from the Rawles too. Often present unperceived at their violent squabbles, observing the method by which Eld invariably settled these affairs, she had correctly arrived at the conclusion that down on this alien planet here a man must support and feed and clothe his wedded mate.

Marriage she could not know about. But it wasn't hard to guess that those engrossed documents which had prominent framed places in many of the fishers' shacks, as well as in Eld's parlor, had a close connection with the fact that a man and a woman shared the self-same shelter. And Eld's evening prayer before that faded photograph of his—well, she herself, she thought, was not so unlike that picture.

So, at once artful and artless, she had boldly helped herself to the old marriage scroll, erased the words "*Deborah Krogstad*," and inserted her own name. Again, aping the chief's regular habit, she had sent off the altered certificate in a franked envelope to the Navy Department.

After that she had hovered and watched, warily and fearfully, and yet hopefully, to perceive the effect of the reply. If the man she loved—

For she loved him. So far as she could know, this must be love. At any rate, consistently, she was happy when she was in his neighborhood; distinctly unhappy when he was too long away.

It did seem to her, waiting, that if the answer angered him, there was no life here on Earth left. She could never return to her own home—she knew enough of the gravitational pull of this vastly larger globe to enjoy no hope of escape like that. Yes, if he should be vexed, there was nothing for her but to die.

But he had not been vexed. She had gone to him happily. She need not again know fear.

IN gossamer chiffon—for her man put odd insistence upon at least a vestigial apparel—she nestled in the sand beside her husband in the moonglow of the spring night.

Already she had mastered a surprising number of the words and phrases of the Earth tongue: equations and ratios and figures may be a concept common to all spheres.

Her name, she had pointed out, was like the name of yonder star, a ruddy, blinking spark close to the western horizon, dropping down below Sirius and the taut sword-belt of Orion.

"*Aldebaran*," Eld pronounced it.

"*Debarana*," she corrected.

The moon's path, southeast, was a flat, silver way, so glitteringly argent as to dim all but the great stars and one planet.

"*Deborah—Debarana?*"

Eld had to shiver at that, as if a breeze from the dark had struck him ghostly chill. "You were born—when?" he made her understand.

"One, two, point, eight—how do you say?—years since."

He reckoned her base of figures. "Just twenty years ago—our time." The slow, soft sigh of the surf from the breakers beyond the far shoals was like a shivering whisper: the suggestion of what could not be. "Not,"—he scarcely dared speak aloud,—"*not* when that planet, Mercury, and the Moon were in conjunction?"

"When we of the Moon"—she held her forefinger between his face and hers—"stood thus between Mercury and thee, lover."



A deeply interesting story of the Nevada mining country, by the able author of "The Phantom President" and the Horseface Maud series.

Tote Your Own

By GEORGE F. WORTS

Illustrated by Monte Crews

THE silver dollar was suspended by a string from a whitewashed rafter. It hung motionless. The shabby young man aimed and fired. The bullet cut the string two inches above the dollar, which dropped with a sweet ring to the concrete floor.

"This gent wins the dollar!" the barker shouted. "Who else wants to try their luck? Step up, gents! Three shots for a dime! Cut the string and win the dollar!"

A counter man picked up the dollar and held it out to the sharpshooter. The shabby young man closed his fist over it, and thrust the fist into his pocket with a pleased air.

A laconic voice behind him drawled: "Nice shootin', son! You must be Peter Slocum."

Peter Slocum turned with a surprised smile. It had been a long time since anyone had spoken his name. The speaker was an elderly stranger who, with his dusty black sombrero and his baggy suit sprinkled with cigar ashes, was evidently a Westerner. Desert-blue eyes set in pouches in a leathery desert-brown face looked kindly and honest. He shook Peter's hand warmly.

"My name's John Hamby, Peter—Pop Hamby. I've been trying to find you

ever since I've been in Detroit. I'm an old friend of your father's."

The young man nodded gravely. "Yes, I remember the name. Dad knew you in Nevada."

"Where can we go for a talk?"

"There's a little beer bar down the street."

In the almost deserted beer bar, Pop Hamby looked Peter over and said, "Let's see that dollar you shot down."

Peter Slocum grinned. "Why?"

The desert-blue eyes became a little heavy. "I saw that feller palm that dollar, Pete. I hate to see Dan Slocum's son so hard pushed he's got to be a shill."

Peter Slocum sipped beer and said: "See these shoulders? I got them being a French maid in a livery stable, also shoveling snow. Before that I was a grease-monkey in a filling station. I took that job when the diner I was washing dishes in went *pfft!* Before that, I had tried to sell municipal bonds. I can't quite decide what the four-year business course I took fitted me for; but there, in reverse, you have the story of my life. I should worry about a dollar!"

"Didn't Dan leave you anything?"

"Did you ever watch a drop of water on a hot stovetid?"

"Your father used to be a fine business man, Peter. He was when he was working the Golden Tiger. I suppose you know the Tiger was eaten up by taxes."

"Along with everything else."

Mr. Hamby finished his beer and said: "I bought the Tiger for the taxes six months ago, and I've come East to promote capital for development work. I think we're on the verge of finding the lost vein. I'm getting good assays."

"How good?"

"Six to twelve dollars."

"That isn't much."

"No, but it's an indication. Now this is my proposition. There isn't one man out in that country I'm sure I can trust. I'm getting on in years. I need a partner—bad. And I'm willing to give an interest in the Tiger to a man I know I can trust. I knew your father, and I've checked up on you. You're a square shooter. And that's what I want."

The shabby young man looked incredulous. "You want to give me an interest in the Golden Tiger?"

Pop Hamby smiled. "Don't think I'm offering you something on a silver platter, son. I'm looking for that lost vein. The assays are promising. That's all."

"Do you know," Peter asked, "how much my father put into the ground, looking for that lost vein? Twenty thousand more than he took out!"

Pop Hamby nodded. "I know he did. I'm not offering you a sure thing. A hole in the ground is just a hole in the ground until we find the ore in place. Remember being out there as a kid?"

"Only vaguely."

"You'd like it. And until we know whether or not that hole's a skunk, you'd have three square meals a day. And if it is a skunk, you wouldn't be much worse off than you are now. It's no harder to get a job in Las Vegas than here, what with Boulder Dam right there."

Pop Hamby paused to strip the wrapping from a cigar and light it.

"Now here's the second reason you'd be valuable to me: your shooting. I've checked up on that too. You scored a pretty consistent ninety-nine point five on your college team. Don't get the idea that the West is still wild. It isn't. But gold-mines are dangerous things. The Tiger is still a hundred miles from the nearest town. It's lonely country. And if we strike high-grade there's a lot of guys who might start trouble. I'm too old for trouble, and I'm no good with a gun. I want a partner I can trust and a partner who can shoot."

Peter had been looking dreamily out a window. Without turning his head, he said: "What's your proposition?"

"A half interest. That's what you're worth to me. You don't have to give me a quick decision. Think it over. I'll be here a couple of days longer and you can call me at my hotel."

"Wait a minute," Peter said, as the Westerner started to go. "What was it Washington said to Lafayette?"

"I'm afraid you've got me there, son."

"He said: 'Lafayette, we are here!'"

"I thought that was Pershing."

"Oh, no, Pershing said: 'We have met the enemy, and they have apologized.'"

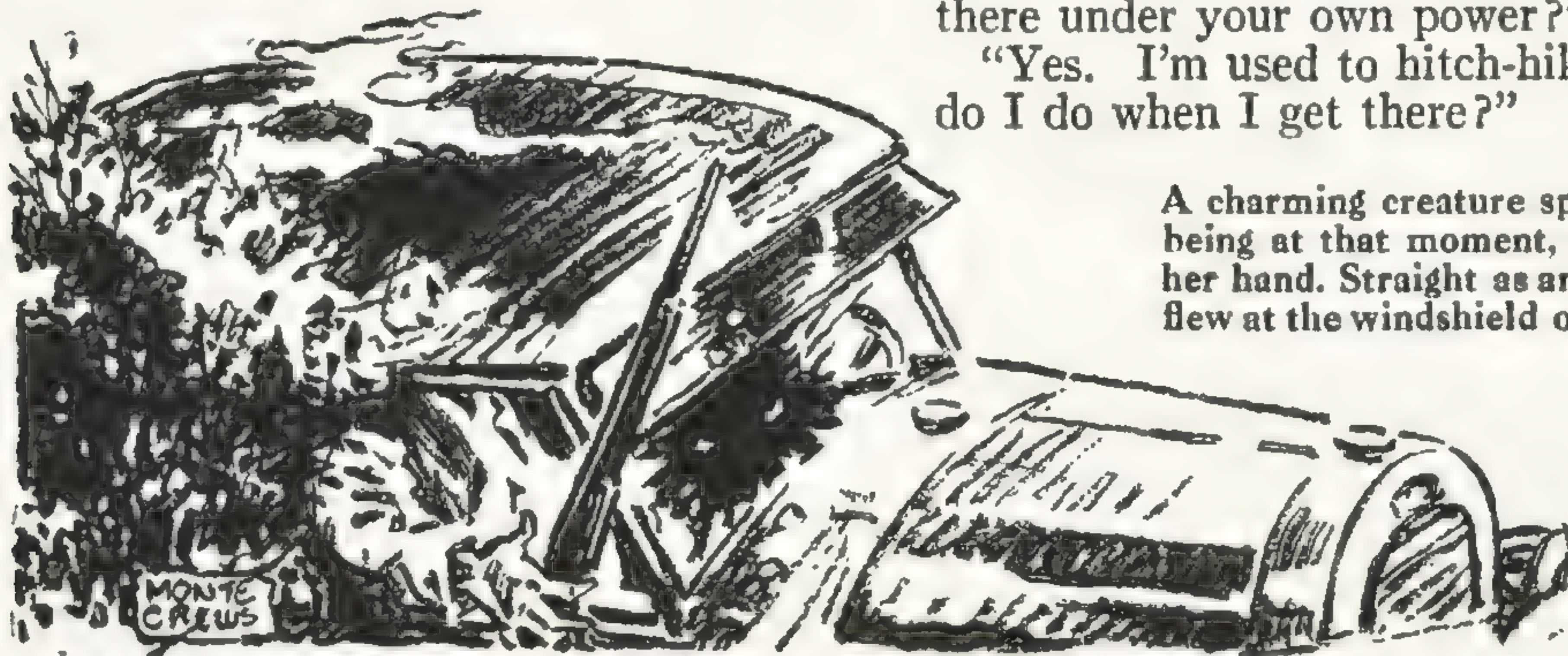
The desert-blue eyes were steady and searching. "What do you mean?"

"I've decided to take you up. I don't know whether anything you've said is true or not. And I don't give a hoot. But you're right on one thing—I wouldn't be any worse off there than I am here. I've got nothing to lose and everything to gain. I'll go."

THEY went to Pop Hamby's hotel. When the agreement was typed and signed and each man had pocketed his copy, Pop Hamby said: "Pete, the capital I raised won't be ready for a week or so. Do you think you could get out there under your own power?"

"Yes. I'm used to hitch-hiking. What do I do when I get there?"

A charming creature sprang into being at that moment, a rock in her hand. Straight as an arrow it flew at the windshield of the car.



"Chances are, I'll be there first. If I'm not, wait. There's grub in the cook-shack and a pipeline from a spring to a tank. Good water. Good-by and good luck, young feller."

He gave Peter a silver dollar. Peter thumbed a ride as far as the airport, where his deplorable luck of the past few years apparently decided to give him a day off. An old friend was flying to the Coast and would gladly drop him off in southern Nevada. . . .

Two days later Peter alighted in a desert town gray with dust and quivering with heat-waves. At filling-stations he learned he could easily thumb a ride as far as Indian Springs. The rest of the way, some sixty miles, was desert road—wheel-tracks traveled only by prospectors and seldom oftener than once a month. He'd have to hike that.

He exhausted his capital on a hamburger, a glass of beer and a secondhand canteen, and started down Fremont Street toward the Tonopah highway.

He was passing the Boulder Club when a voice with a whine in it said: "Brother, I hear you're headin' for the old Golden Tiger mine."

As Peter turned, he was aware of a curious happening in the hot afternoon air, a glassy stillness. He tried later to account for it, also a quickening of his senses. The air was threaded with snowy

lint from cottonwood trees, and pierced by ruby shafts from the sun setting on far-away blue mountains; the heat from the sidewalk was that of a sadiron held close to the cheek, and he had a sudden ridiculous vision of naked Indians in war-paint charging through clouds of white dust.

He saw a thin, high-shouldered man of forty with yellow eyes under the brim of a sweat-stained red felt hat. Peter had learned never to trust gratuitous strangers.

The yellow eyes appeared to have no centers. "Friend o' Pop Hamby's, aint you?"

There was something so persistent about this man that Peter grew uneasy.

"What makes you so interested?"

"Thought I might give you a lift out there in a couple days. It's a mean hike. Name's Jarvis. Hamby aint here yet."

Peter thought, "This bird is phony," and said, "Thanks, Mr. Jarvis, but they taught me in school that procrastination is the thief of time."

Mr. Jarvis did not argue. "I better tell you about the crazy woman at the Buckhorn. A kind of a young woman.





"When you bent over me in the road," Peter began, "and I looked into those eyes—" "Fried or scrambled?" "When love comes to a Slocum, he reck's not of distance!"

Watch out for her. She's kind of dangerous—quick with a gun. Thought I'd warn you. Just keep away from her."

The yellow eyes slid away from Peter's cool and steady stare.

Peter said lazily: "Know what Wellington said at Waterloo, Mr. Jarvis? He said: 'It's only a cheese-box on a raft.'"

He walked on, having felt for a moment the galvanic presence of danger, but not knowing what to make of it.

IT was dark when he reached the Tonopah highway. He had walked fully a mile when the first headlights appeared. Stepping off the pavement and onto the gravel shoulder, he faced the lights and waited.

The car slowed down. It seemed to be edging over toward him. Suddenly, with a roar of the engine, it charged at him.

Peter jumped backward into the ditch, and the car shot past. Obviously its driver had intended to run him down. The car stopped. The whining voice of Mr. Jarvis complained: "You damned fool, why didn't you tromp on it?"

Peter did not hear the answer. Two men were getting out. Peter climbed

the other side of the ditch. A fresh smell of vegetation floated on the hot night air. Peter walked on—and he was suddenly ankle-deep in the gumbo of a recently irrigated alfalfa field.

He wallowed through the field. The mud was too heavy for running. Behind him, two men with flashlights hunted for him. He heard Mr. Jarvis curse as he sank in the mud.

It was a novel and sickening sensation for Peter. These two tough gents were determined to kill him. Perhaps they were enemies of Pop Hamby. Perhaps, knowing he was Pop's bodyguard, they wanted him dead. But it was all very baffling. He went slugging through the field with the man-hunters slugging after. Then he reached a dirt road and sprinted. An object looming like a house proved to be a great loose pile of lumber. The fugitive crawled in. He had lost his canteen.

The two men jogged past, softly puffing.

Peter crawled out and doubled back across the soggy field to the highway. The sedan's engine was still running.

He got in and drove the forty-odd miles to Indian Springs, then drove a half

mile farther. The gasoline-gauge registered empty. Leaving the sedan in the ditch, he borrowed a canteen that hung from the door-handle, and walked back to the filling-station. He spent the night under a cottonwood. At dawn he awoke and filled his canteen at the filling-station, where a pretty, freckled girl told him he was a nut to try to walk to the Golden Tiger.

"There isn't a drop of water or a living soul between here and there," she said. "Read that sign."

Peter asked her what she knew about a fellow named Jarvis.

"He's just a prospector."

"Crazy?"

"My dad claims they're all crazy."

Peter walked to the sign nailed to a post and read:

WARNING!

No gas, oil or water beyond here.

Tote your own.

Ruts yellow with powdered silt stretched away into a baked gray wilderness.

Peter yelled good-by to the freckled girl and started walking. He was anxious to reach the cook-shack where all that grub was. The instant the sun came up, the desert turned hot. By noon, the ground was as vibrant with heat as molten metal. There was no shade.

With brief rests, Peter trudged all day and into the night. It was uphill all the way. Toward midnight, the air turned as thin and frosty as the air in an electric icebox. His overworked muscles became stiff and sore. And when the sun rose, the electric icebox went off, and the electric oven went on again.

Sharp stones cut through the pilgrim's paper-thin soles. He became light-headed and dizzy. His eyes ached and burned. Late in the afternoon he was attacked by gnats. They got into his hair, his nose and eyes. One flew into his left ear, and worried its way down against the eardrum. The frantic beating of its wings was the roar of an airplane.

He poured the last of his water into the ear. He tried snagging the gnat with twigs from desert brush. It kept on roaring.

He capered along the ruts in torture. He reached a signpost at a fork. Two wooden arrows were labeled respectively, "*Golden Tiger Mine—2½ Mi.*," and "*Buckhorn Mine—2 Mi.*"

But help was coming; he heard several

cars. And one was going his way. He wondered if it was Mr. Jarvis.

He managed to sit up, with one hand pressed to his tortured ear. A car was lurching up the slight grade toward him. The man at the wheel was red-faced, fat and benevolent-looking.

The car stopped and began dancing ridiculously in the heat. Peter understood this. Other things such as mountains had been dancing ridiculously in the heat for hours. A mere car should dance with the greatest of ease.

There was a sudden sound like tough canvas being torn close to Peter's head. This was attended by a loud, explosive sound and a metallic shriek. It was amusingly familiar. Peter had heard it often in target-butts when high-power bullets went overhead.

His vision took another turn at fantasy. The fat fellow in the dancing car was leaning out and taking deliberate aim at him with a rifle. Peter saw the hole in the muzzle and the glint of the sight above it.

It was all terribly funny, including the pair of really beautiful slender bare legs beside him, belonging quite logically to a charming young creature in khaki shorts and shirt, who had whimsically sprung into being at that moment with a rock in her hand.

SHE threw this rock. Ah, it was a beautiful throw! Straight as an arrow it flew at the windshield of the car that swam in this jumbled mirage. Half of the windshield melted away in splinters. The man's hat flew off, and he and the rifle vanished utterly, and the girl bent down and Peter said through chattering teeth: "You darling little walrus, there's a gnat in my ear, and ships and shoes and sealing-wax and cabbages and all the king's horses."

"We'll soon fix that," the Walrus said.

"What delicious brown eyes you have," Peter chattered.

She knelt beside him, sliding an arm under his head. Her eyes were delicious; they were brown; her lips delicious; they were red; her face was a delicious brown. She was improbably young and beautiful. But *delicious* was the word for her.

She dragged him into a small roadster. He heard gears scream, and everything stopped being funny and delicious. Hot and cold knives were revolving in his head. Presently, around a bend, he saw a mass of heavy machinery; then he

was walking on quicksilver into an airy bright room with blue gingham curtains at the windows and a large luxurious-looking bed against one wall.

When Peter was stretched out on the bed, the girl turned his head on one side and filled his ear with peroxide. The fierce little bubbles forced the gnat to the surface, and the girl skimmed it off with the end of a match, then turned his head so the ear could drain.

"You're O.K. now," she said.

But he wasn't O.K. He was anything in the world but O.K.—he had a high fever. All night the girl sat beside the bed while the last of the Slocums tossed and talked of gigantic and terrible mirages. She fed him water with an eye-dropper, and kept changing the wet towels on his forehead. The fever broke in the morning. Peter went to sleep and slept twenty hours.

WHEN he awoke, the sun was coming up, and he felt all right. He felt weak, but all right otherwise. And when he smelled coffee, and heard and smelled bacon frying in a skillet, he felt better.

Through a window he saw, across a cañon, the black slope of a mountain. At the base was a collection of shacks near a mound of fresh yellow dirt or broken rock. Beside one of these shacks was a galvanized tank. A pipe ran down to it from a clump of green vegetation.

He went to the kitchen doorway. Busily doing things at the stove, the girl did not see him at first. She was wearing a different set of khaki shorts and blouse, faded almost white. They seemed a trifle small for her, and this skimpy effect was enchanting. She was standing in an attitude he remembered, with slim brown legs apart. And when she turned and saw him, he verified the rest of what he had thought was a mirage. She was still delicious.

Seeing him, she blushed. She was evidently the kind of girl who, when she blushes, does a thorough job of it. She seemed to be blushing all over. Even her knees were blushing. Peter watched the course of this phenomenon with appreciation.

But when he saw her eyes, he suspected that she hadn't been blushing with embarrassment. Her eyes were cold and hostile. She took a quick step to a table covered with red-and-white-checked gingham. Very near her, on the edge of the table, was a large black revolver.

In a voice that could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be called hospitable, she said: "Are you Peter Slocum?"

Peter looked curiously from the revolver to her lovely angry face and nodded.

"Then get out of here," she said throatily. "Get out of this house and get off my property—you crook!"

Peter did not move, but his whimsical smile faded. "You sound as if you mean that," he said.

"You bet I mean it!" she said. And she reached for the revolver.

Peter looked grave. "You know what Betsy Ross said when she wrote, 'The Star Spangled Banner?'" he asked. "'Shoot if you must this old gray head, but spare your country's flag,' she said."

"Betsy Ross—" the girl at the table began angrily, then checked herself.

Peter, watching her hand on the revolver, said lazily: "Did a Mr. Jarvis tell you I was a crook? Before you answer that,—or shoot,—let me tell you what he told me about you. This is the Buckhorn, isn't it?"

The girl looked at him with scorn. "You ought to know! You were here three months ago, trying to high-grade that machinery!"

"Could it," Peter asked dreamily, "have been Pop Hamby? Mr. Jarvis told me about a kind of a young woman up here. You're a kind of a young woman. He said you were as crazy as a bat."

THE girl in the skimpy shorts took in a breath through her teeth.

"Don't shoot!" Peter said hastily. "I'll buy your machinery!"

"I'll let it rot," she cried, "before I deal with you!"

"It must be this altitude," Peter murmured. "Did I dream that a red-faced fellow took a shot at me with a rifle?"

She looked at him with further scorn. "I imagine a man like you is shot at pretty often."

"They've missed me, so far," Peter answered. "Do you have to keep your hand on that gun? I don't know a thing about your machinery. And I didn't come here to see you, although I'll admit the walk was worth it. I'm Pop Hamby's new hired man. He and I are going to do something about the Golden Tiger."

The hostility in her eyes had not lessened in the least. And she kept her hand on the butt of the revolver.

"You see," Peter went on conversa-

tionally, "my father used to own the Golden Tiger. But it was eaten up by taxes. Pop Hamby bought it."

The girl was staring at him, not with hostility, but with a strange mixture of suspicion and wonder.

"So you see," he continued, "I haven't the slightest interest in your machinery. And just as a matter of record, this is the first time I've been West since I was five."

"You—you aren't just joking about Pop Hamby, are you?" the girl asked. She seemed uncertain now, not angry.

Peter shook his head. "Certainly not. Pop looked me up in Detroit and persuaded me to accept a half-interest in the Tiger."

The girl stared at him a few seconds longer.

"But you own the Tiger!" she cried.

PETER stopped lounging against the door-jamb. He stood up straight.

"How do you mean, I own the Tiger?"

She had evidently decided to overcome her prejudices and believe, at least for a trial period, what he was saying. The rosy color rushed back into her cheeks, her arms and her legs.

"Wasn't there any record of it in your father's papers?"

Peter shook his head.

"No record of your father sending my father—Miles Corbin—a check years ago to keep up the taxes and do development work?"

"No," Peter said quietly. Then he smiled. "But I'll bet I remember you."

He could see a pulse beating in her throat. Upset as he was, that wildly beating pulse made him feel wild too. He wanted to kiss somebody.

"You're Dale Corbin!" he said. "Your father and mine were great pals out here—oh, twenty years ago. We used to be engaged, when you were two and I was five!"

Miss Corbin said swiftly: "I was young and foolish then."

"Dad used to talk about it. He wished he'd never left this country. So do I. I guess I'd better sit down. I feel a little weak."

"You'd better have some breakfast, Mr. Slocum. Drink this coffee."

"Why did that fellow take a pot shot at me, Miss Corbin?"

"I don't know. His name is Delbo."

"He must have been pretty desperate to take a shot at me with you standing there."

"I don't think he saw me until I threw that rock."

"Who is he?"

"He's in with Hamby. So is Jarvis."

"Oh, yeah?"

"Yes. Delbo and Jarvis have been digging a new shaft for Hamby with the last of the money your father sent mine. Do you realize what all this probably means?"

"They've probably struck gold."

"And that," Miss Corbin said breathlessly, "is why Pop went East to find you! He told me he was going to try to put over a deal with you."

"He did," Peter said. "He put over a honey."

"And he told me you had tried to steal my machinery. He told me you'd probably come up and try to chisel me out of it."

"Is that why you're here, Miss Corbin?"

"Of course! Do you suppose I'd live here? He simply wanted to keep us apart!"

"Wild horses," Peter said, "couldn't keep us apart."

The girl in faded shorts seemed not to hear him. She began to pace up and down the kitchen with a thumb in her teeth. Peter watched her admiringly. Her eyes glowed. Her fluffy brown hair jiggled about her small head. She turned on him with a little whimper of rage.

"That old fox!" she panted. "I let him take charge of that development work. He said he was going East to raise capital to buy my machinery, so they could sink the shaft faster. He's chiseled you, and he's going to chisel me. Since my father died six months ago, I've utterly trusted him. I've let him invest the little money my father left. And I suppose your deal with him is in writing."

"Yes. Here's the agreement." He gave it to her.

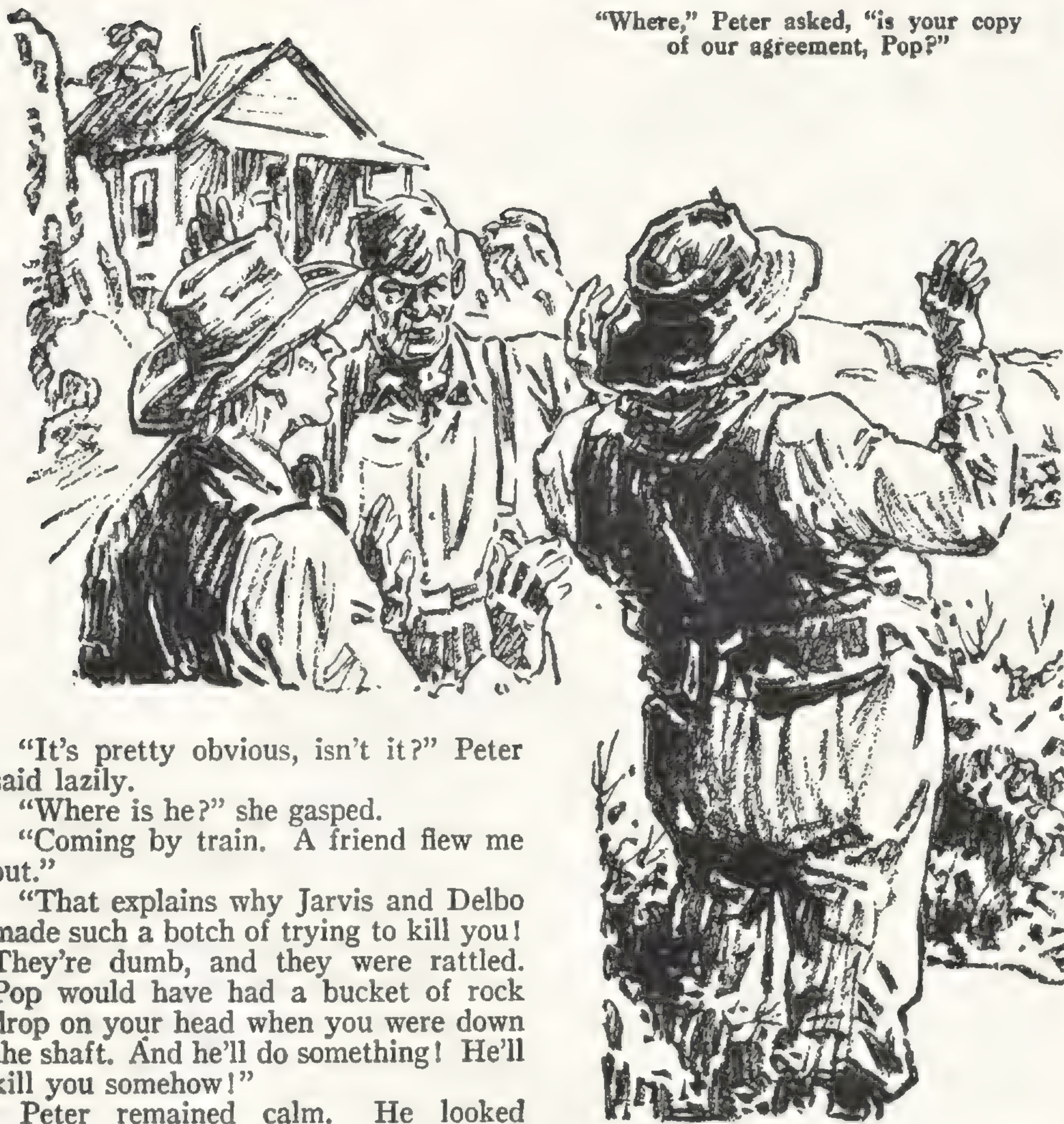
READING it, she suddenly shrieked: "Didn't you read this?"

"Yes."

"But this—*this!* In case of the death of either partner, the survivor will inherit the entire property!"

"Oh, yes. He told me he was getting old—and had no heir."

"But don't you realize that Hamby went East simply to trick you into signing a paper making him half owner—then got you out here where he could quietly murder you?"



"Where," Peter asked, "is your copy of our agreement, Pop?"

"It's pretty obvious, isn't it?" Peter said lazily.

"Where is he?" she gasped.

"Coming by train. A friend flew me out."

"That explains why Jarvis and Delbo made such a botch of trying to kill you! They're dumb, and they were rattled. Pop would have had a bucket of rock drop on your head when you were down the shaft. And he'll do something! He'll kill you somehow!"

Peter remained calm. He looked thoughtfully at her pink knees. "What'll you bet?"

"Don't you realize they'll keep on trying to kill you? What can you do? You don't know these men! You don't know this country!"

"No, and I'm not awfully bright. But let's stay and fight it out. We'll lick 'em, then we'll put your machinery on my mine. We'll merge! Ah, Dale, when you picked me out of the road, the tide turned."

AFTER studying him with quizzical eyes for a moment, Miss Corbin seemed to lose interest in the conversation. Her rosy flush departed, and her eyes became cool.

"This excitement," she said wearily, "is too much for you. You'd better have your breakfast."

"Our engagement breakfast."

She laughed, but she didn't look amused. "Oh, I broke that off twenty years ago. You were such a playboy."

Peter took her hand and held it possessively. "You know, Dale," he said gravely, "it's a strange thing about us Slocums. When our luck reaches its lowest ebb, we always meet a woman—the right woman. It's tradition. It's history. It's fate."

"It's nonsense," she said coldly.

He spun her into his arms, held her firmly and kissed her.

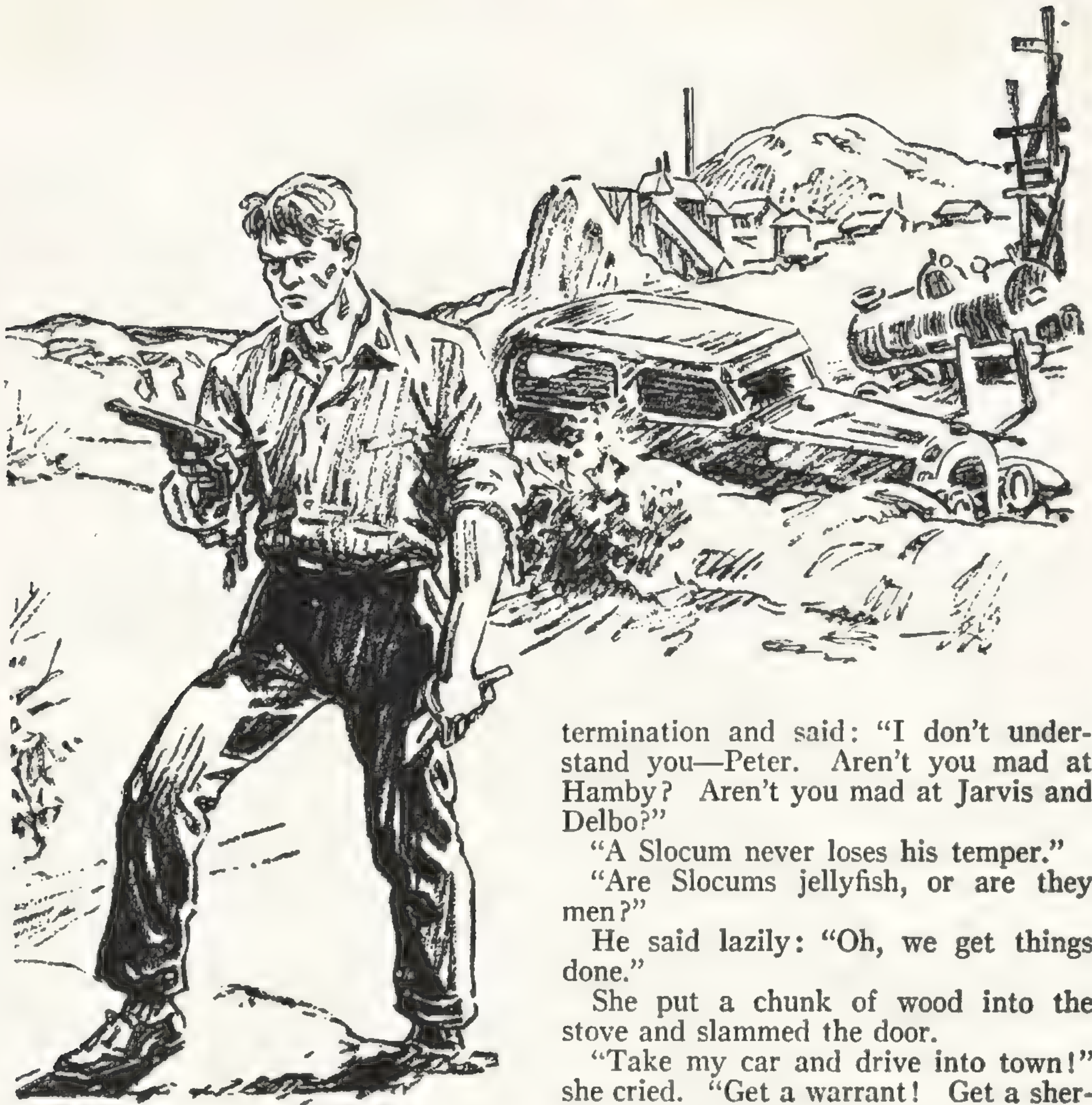
"It's love," he declared against her lips.

Her hand flew up, *slap!* against his cheek. He backed off and laid three cool fingers against the hot red blossom in his cheek.

"The heat and that gnat and all this double-crossing and attempted murder has upset you," she said. And when Peter started toward her, she wailed: "Don't kiss me! I hate it!"

Peter grinned teasingly.

"I thought you liked it. You seemed to like it."



"I thought I did before you did it."

"That has the earmarks of an odious comparison."

She looked bored. "I've decided I don't like being kissed."

"Why did you come down that road?"

"Oh, Lord! I watched you with my field-glasses. I saw you staggering. I knew you were sun-drunk."

Peter, hunched in a chair, gazed at her adoringly.

"When you bent over me in the road, and I looked into those delicious eyes—" he began, clasping his hands.

"How do you like your eggs?"

"Darling, I'd gladly have walked the entire two thousand miles in my bare feet if I'd known you'd be waiting at the end."

"Fried or scrambled?"

"When love comes to a Slocum, he reck's not of distance."

She broke eggs into the pan. She turned from the stove with an air of de-

termination and said: "I don't understand you—Peter. Aren't you mad at Hamby? Aren't you mad at Jarvis and Delbo?"

"A Slocum never loses his temper."

"Are Slocums jellyfish, or are they men?"

He said lazily: "Oh, we get things done."

She put a chunk of wood into the stove and slammed the door.

"Take my car and drive into town!" she cried. "Get a warrant! Get a sheriff!"

"I'm too primitive."

She ran the fingers of both hands nervously into the hair at her temples.

"But what are you going to do?"

"Eat these eggs."

HE was finishing breakfast when Dale heard the sound of a car. It was climbing the long grade from the valley to the Golden Tiger—a small black sedan containing three men and supplies.

The car stopped before one of the shacks. The three men got out. With Dale's field-glasses, Peter identified them. The one in a black hat and black suit was Pop Hamby. The thin one in the red felt hat was Mr. Jarvis. And the short fat one with the rifle was Mr. Delbo.

The three men stared across the valley at the Buckhorn. Then they unloaded the sedan. They hung water-bags on nails in front of the shack. They carried grocery cartons inside. When the car

was unloaded, Mr. Hamby and the short fat man got in and drove away, leaving Mr. Jarvis. He stayed in the doorway of the shack with a rifle in the crook of his arm.

"They'll be coming here," Peter guessed.

"They'll kill you!"

"How many people know that you're here?"

"Eight or ten. Why?"

"Then they won't kill me."

"You don't know these men, Peter!" she said hysterically.

"Is that rifle loaded?"

"Yes. But don't be silly, Peter!"

He went into the bedroom for the rifle and stood it in a corner by the kitchen door.

THEY presently heard the whine of gears as the sedan climbed the road to the Buckhorn. It appeared around the bend and stopped near an old steam boiler. Pop Hamby got out. His desert-blue eyes in his desert-brown face were as kindly and honest as Peter remembered them. Peter observed that Mr. Delbo's rifle lay along the back of the front seat, and that when Pop Hamby got out and walked over, he took care never to obstruct Mr. Delbo's view of the doorway.

Mr. Hamby stopped a few feet away and looked first at the pale face and frightened eyes of Dale Corbin, then at the curiously amiable eyes of Peter Slocum.

"I reckon," Pop Hamby drawled, "there's no sense beatin' around the bush."

"You old crook! You murderer!" Dale burst out.

Pop Hamby kept his attention on Peter's eyes. He reached into his coat pocket and took out a folded paper.

"Son," he drawled, "here's something for you to sign. It's a quitclaim deed, deeding the Golden Tiger property over from you to me for one dollar and other valuable considerations."

"You gave me the dollar," Peter recalled. "Let's have the valuable considerations."

"A chance to get out of here with your skin."

"Why, Pop! Aren't you getting big-hearted?"

The honest blue eyes studied him heavily. "Pete, it's a dandy chance for you to use that sense of humor. We've got this shack well covered from over

there. Tonight and tomorrow night and the night after, what with these long days and the moon up so early and down so late and bright enough to read a paper by, you can't make a move we won't see."

Peter looked thoughtful. "And what makes you think we'll get thirsty?"

"The spring here's dry. I know how much water she carries in her roadster, and I saw how old her wheeltracks were by that spring of ours. When you get ready, just let me know."

"I might wave a white flag?" Peter suggested.

"Sure. That'll do."

And with the same prudence with which he had disembarked, Pop Hamby returned and climbed into the sedan. When it started away, Peter picked up the rifle.

Almost sobbing, Dale panted: "What are you going to do?"

"What was it Napoleon said?"

"Oh, please don't be silly now!"

"I'm not being silly. What did he say?"

"An army travels on its stomach!" she wailed.

"No, no, no. That was what Nelson said at Trafalgar."

"Shoot when you see the whites of their eyes?" Dale whimpered.

"No! That was Robert E. Lee. Napoleon merely said that the best defense is an offense."

He snuggled the butt of the rifle into his shoulder, aimed quickly and fired. The sedan was just vanishing. Gasoline at once spurted from a hole in its gas-tank. Simultaneously the sound of savagely torn canvas occurred, and with a clang a hole appeared in the corrugated roof above them.

DALE pulled the sharpshooter inside the cabin and slammed the door.

"They'll kill you!" she shrieked.

"Will you marry me, Dale, if they don't?"

She cried hysterically: "I hate you! You're conceited, and you're dumb!"

"Dale! What did General Grant say at Appomattox?"

"You are! What can you do? There's only a drop in that bucket."

"There's a full pot of coffee. In a pinch we can drain your radiator. I have a wonderful plan. I'm going to pour sauce on the gander. Pop wanted an expert rifle-shot. I can't let him think I got the job under false pretenses."

"They'll kill us both!"

"Dale, if you don't stop screaming, I'll turn you over on my knee and spank you until your pants smoke."

With a strangled sob, Dale went into the bedroom, slamming the door.

PETER stretched himself on the floor, hooked open the door with his fingers and gazed across the valley. He methodically adjusted the sights of the rifle for six hundred yards. It had seemed to shoot a little low and to the left. The breeze was fairly stiff—at about four o'clock. He made further corrections.

After a half hour of waiting, he saw Pop Hamby and Mr. Delbo trudging up the Golden Tiger road. When the two men entered the shack, he began to shoot. He shot the two waterbags hanging by the doorway, and watched them burst. He shot several holes in the galvanized tank near the bottom. He shot at the pipe-line behind the tank, and missed. The rifle was still shooting to the left.

The air was suddenly full of ripping canvas. A window-pane burst. Sunlight entered through supplementary holes in the roof.

He called: "Dale, I need more shrapnel."

When she did not answer, he crawled into the bedroom. Dale was lying on the bed, with her face smothered in a pillow. He grabbed an ankle, pulled her to the floor beside him and said: "Lie flat. They're shooting high, but they're bad shots and might miss the roof."

"We'll be killed!" she sobbed.

"Here, here! What did Farragut say at Gibraltar?"

"Oh, how I hate you, Peter Slocum!"

"Wrong again! He said, 'Don't give up the ship.'"

He found a box of 30-06 cartridges, crawled back into the kitchen and reloaded the rifle. A man ran out of the cook-shack with a bucket. Peter aimed at the bucket and missed, but placed the bullet so close that he believed for a moment the man was hit. The man was Mr. Jarvis. He spun about and ran back into the shack.

Another spirited volley came from the shack. Peter methodically shot more holes in the tank. Even without the field-glasses he could see water spurting from the holes. He succeeded finally in hitting the pipe-line, and saw a geyser gush into the sunlight.

He watched the jetting water subside and presently stop ebbing.

Dale crawled out of the bedroom, wan and large-eyed.

She asked him in a husky voice why they had stopped shooting.

"Perhaps they're out of ammunition," he conjectured.

"Peter, I'm sorry I was a sissy. Let me spell you. This really isn't a half-bad idea."

"You're cockeyed. It's a lousy idea. But there didn't seem to be any others in the bin."

"It may work," Dale said. She looked much brighter. "There can't be a drop of water in that shack. They've just had a long hot trip, and Delbo and Pop have just had a long hot walk. If you can just keep them away from the spring!"

"What was it Hannibal said when he started up the Alps?"

She groaned.

"Oh, Lord! What did he say?"

"You can't keep a good man down. Not bad, eh?"

Dale merely sniffed derisively.

ALL afternoon, by turns, they watched the shack. No one came out. No one appeared at window or door. The moon rose and the sun set.

Shortly after nightfall, Dale reported a movement in the moonlight on the slope behind the shack.

Peter placed a shot on the slope below the spring and the movement, if any, ceased. The remainder of the night was quiet.

The sun came up and the day grew intensely hot.

At a little before noon, Dale asked: "What do you suppose they're doing now?"

"Thinking—just thinking."

Later, the sounds of a quarrel came across to them. "They are telling Pop," Peter guessed, "that a smart general knows when to surrender. And I'll bet it isn't their first dirty crack at his generalship."

The sounds of the quarrel continued. Then something white floated in the doorway.

"They're giving up!" Dale cried.

In the hot silence, Peter shouted: "Who wins?"

A faint croak answered: "You do."

Peter laid his hand on Dale's and said: "Cease firing. Can't you hear the poor devils groaning?"

TOTE YOUR OWN

"Who said so?"

"Paul Revere."

"I thought he said the scapegoats were coming."

Peter sighed rapturously: "My dream woman!" And shouted: "Come out with your hands up and walk down the road until I say stop."

Three men filed out of the shack and started down the road.

"Stop!" Peter yelled. They stopped. "Miss Corbin," Peter shouted, "will shoot the first man who moves before I get there!"

Leaving her the rifle, he took her revolver, climbed into her roadster, and drove to the fork, then up the other road, past the abandoned sedan, and to where the three men were—three men with puffed and cracked lips and sultry eyes.

"Where," Peter asked, "is your copy of our agreement, Pop?"

"In my inside pocket," Pop croaked.

Peter secured it. He said, "Don't move until I get back there. If you have spare gas for that car, plug up the hole in the tank and get going. If you haven't, help yourselves to water and walk. It's only sixty miles and downhill all the way. And don't ever let anybody tell you, Pop, that you aren't a super-salesman. You sold me the three best ideas I've ever had."

THE rest, of course, is mining history—how Peter Slocum and Dale Corbin went down the shaft and found the greasy brown vein of ferrous quartz shot with gold—the shaft that in a few months' time became famous as it was sunk and crosscuts were driven into that rich and apparently inexhaustible body of ore. Yet no newspaper, radio announcer or other purveyor of current events has ever told just what was said at the bottom of the shaft that day immediately after Peter and Dale made the discovery.

Dropping the pick with which he had been hacking out gold-laced brown chunks from the vein, Peter said lazily: "Dale, what did Anthony say to Cleopatra just before the Battle of the Nile?"

"I know *that* answer," Dale said proudly. "He said: 'I'm going to kiss you again, Egypt; then I'm going to take you to a justice of the peace in Cairo and make an honest woman of you.'"

"Spoken like a Slocum!" Peter applauded.

Rough

A stirring story of desperate hazards in a daring airplane rescue at sea—by the pilot writer who gave us "Murder Island," "Thrown Overboard" and other good ones.

By LELAND
JAMIESON

IT was already nine o'clock, and the northeast wind was rising, rattling a gutter-pipe. That moaning wind, and the desperation of the situation, and the quick passage of the minutes, somehow reduced Leslie Norman to a level with the man who sat immobile in a chair, gazing fixedly at the floor. Leslie Norman's face showed strain.

"I can't deny the danger of it," he agreed somewhat reluctantly. "You say it may be fatal, and possibly you're right. I don't know. All I know is that until this moment I never would have asked a man to attempt a flight I'd turned down; but now, with these people out there, lost, I am asking it. This is a different—"

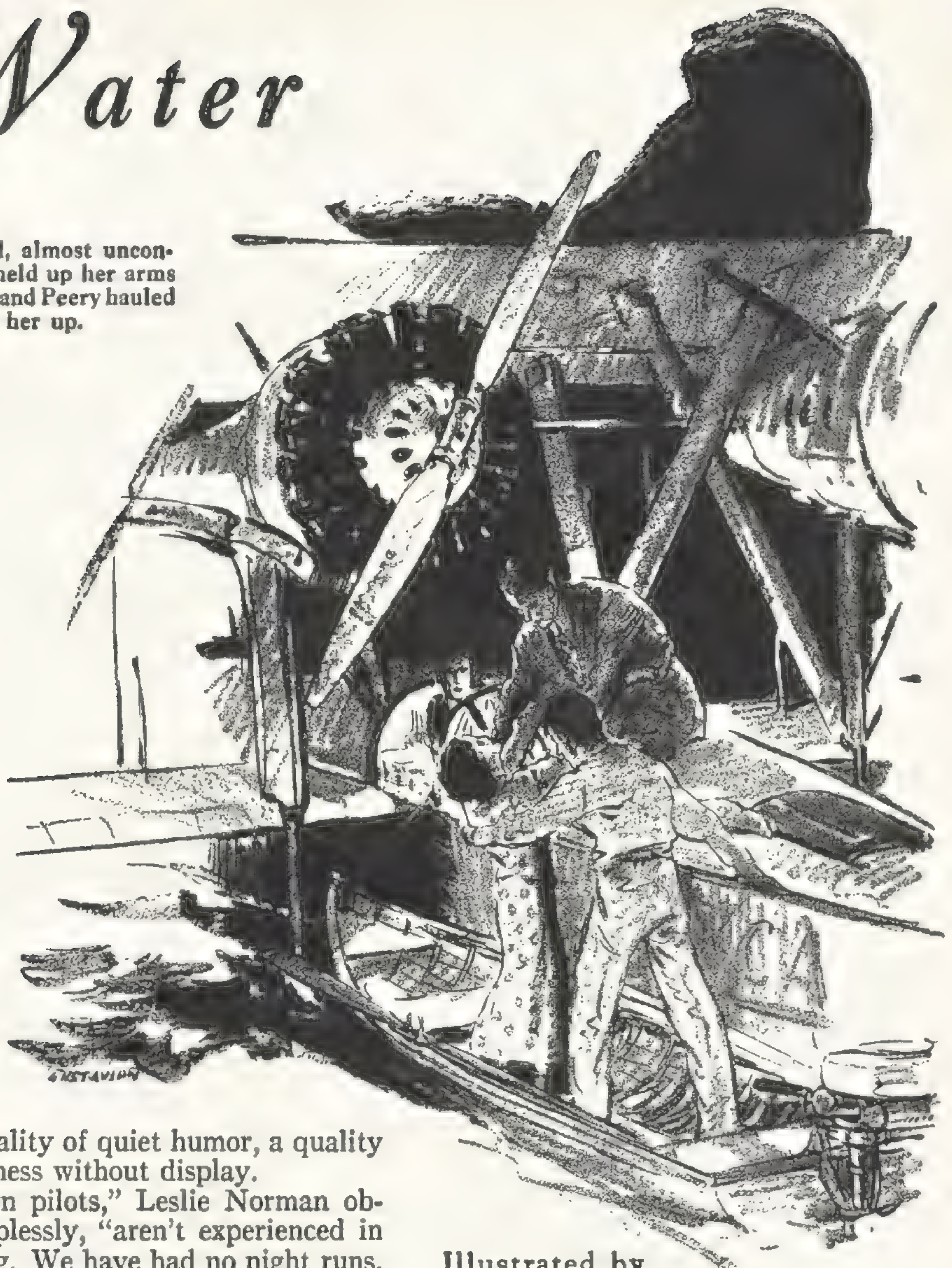
Sucking at his cigarette, Donald Peery challenged in a flat, metallic tone: "Why is it different? This afternoon you blacklist me and five hours later want me to kill myself trying to be a hero!" He laughed sardonically, for the whole affair was tragically ironic. "And you won't change your mind about a job for me if I get back here whole?"

"I can't change it," Leslie Norman said, faintly apologetic. "I don't control the insurance companies. But—what do you say?"

Donald Peery thought, "Where are all your own brave men?" but he didn't say that. He got up and paced around the room, pausing to stare out the window at the lights which were bursting one at a time against the dusk across the skyline of Miami. There was a certain savage bitterness hidden in his eyes. He was a young man oddly old. Yet beneath that oldness there was, paradoxically,

Water

The girl, almost unconscious, held up her arms weakly, and Peery hauled her up.



cally, a quality of quiet humor, a quality of friendliness without display.

"My own pilots," Leslie Norman observed helplessly, "aren't experienced in night flying. We have had no night runs. Ours is a daylight operation altogether, and will be for another month or two. The oldest pilot in the system hasn't had a hundred hours of flying in the dark—and the oldest pilot is at the moment in Brazil. And these two kids are lost at sea, I tell you! They've been unaccounted for since yesterday."

Donald Peery nodded soberly, crunching out his cigarette in the battered ash-tray on the window sill. Miami was ablaze with lights now, as dark rushed in from the Atlantic, while overhead, a glow seemed to press down almost on the buildings, pink and gold, the bottom of the overcast. The ceiling was perhaps five hundred feet, perhaps four hundred.

It was not a night to fly at sea, he knew. A cold, leaden drizzle blurred the

Illustrated by
L. R. Gustavson

outline of the farther buildings, and the wind sighed around the eaves. Peery shivered, standing there; and could not erase from his imagination the faces of that boy and girl, tossing helplessly in a dory in the Gulf Stream somewhere off Canaveral.

"Who are they?" he inquired.

"The girl is Ann DuBois, the daughter of one of our directors. The boy is some young fellow from Vero Beach. DuBois had been fishing on the snapper banks, and the two were to come out to meet his cruiser and come back with him. But they didn't show up after leaving shore, and DuBois' boat came in without them, made sure they'd started, and went back.

Every available boat in that vicinity has been searching since daylight this morning—and not a trace, so far. A plane can do more in thirty minutes than all the boats. But we've got to have a man to fly the seaplane—a man who's flown in nasty stuff at night, blind, and knows what it's about. You've got to help me out!"

"Oh, *do* I?" Peery retorted acidly. Deep inside of him he wanted to attempt a search, at least. It would be extremely dangerous, tonight, and it might be entirely futile; but he kept picturing those kids huddled in that little boat. Yet he could see through this operations manager's demand, and he said tauntingly: "So the girl is a director's daughter, and the director has had you on the telephone—and you'd better step around. I get it! Well, why don't you go up there yourself?"

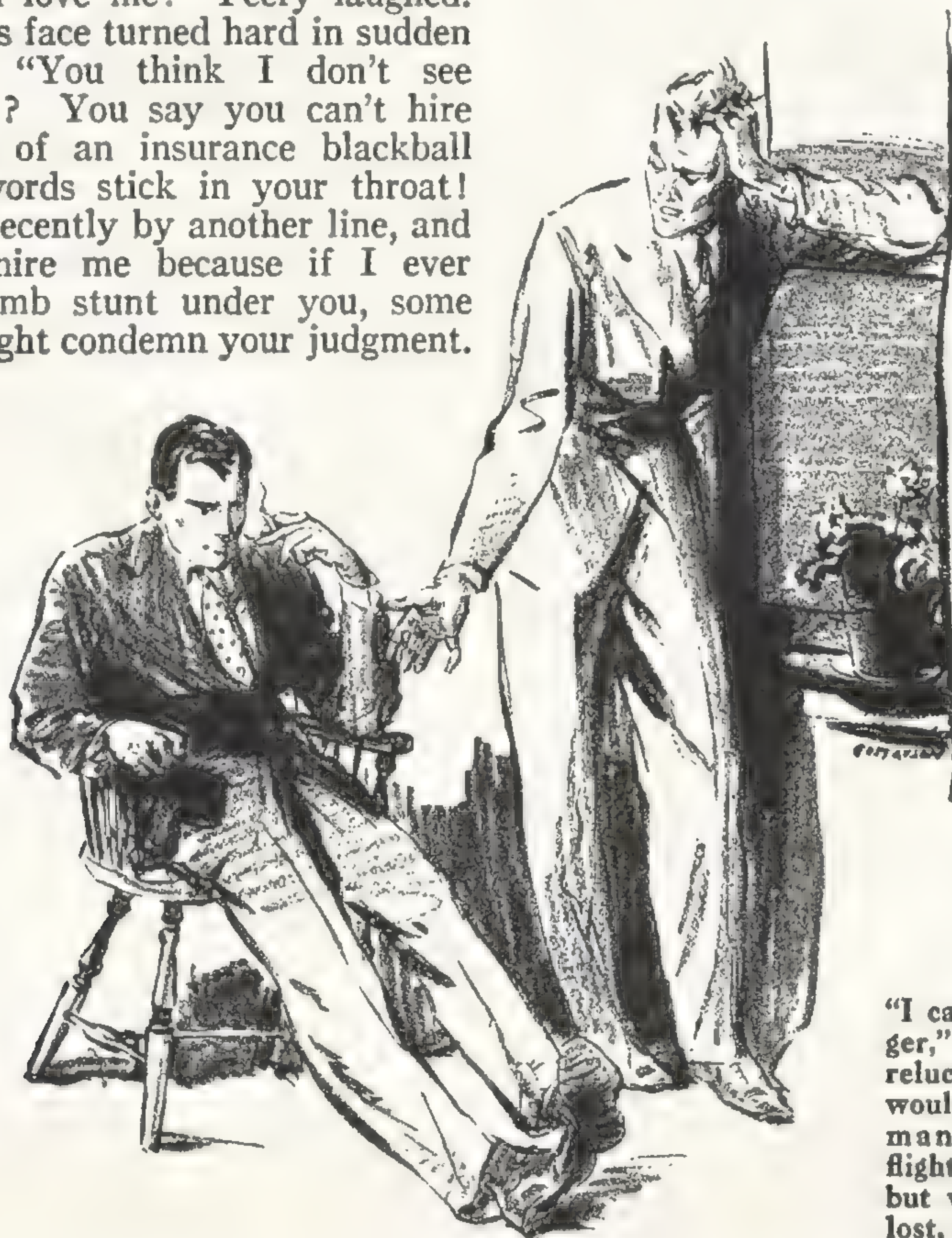
Leslie Norman flushed slowly, but he checked his anger well enough. "You can think whatever you like, Peery," he said doggedly. "I have to come to you this time—you're the only man I know who's qualified to do the trick. If I sent somebody up there and he crashed—"

"How you love me!" Peery laughed. And then, his face turned hard in sudden bitterness: "You think I don't see through you? You say you can't hire me because of an insurance blackball—but the words stick in your throat! I was fired recently by another line, and you won't hire me because if I ever pulled a dumb stunt under you, some brass-hat might condemn your judgment.

But I'm good enough to go out there at night and bust my neck when nobody else will go. Oh, yeah! And the funny thing is I'd *like* to go; the funny thing is I *would* go, if anybody else but you would benefit, besides those kids. I don't think I'd have a prayer, out there tonight—but I'd like to have the chance to try to help those two. But for you? Ha! Why should I stick out my neck? It's a bad night, isn't it? Even the Coast Guard won't go out tonight, eh? And yet you come to me!"

Leslie Norman seemed for a minute to have lost his voice, and when he spoke it was to whisper: "The Coast Guard has no aviation service here. A base is under construction, but it isn't operating yet." His eyes flicked across Donald Peery's face, and they had now a cornered look. "Talk is all right," he said, a faint curl to his lips. "I sized you up this afternoon. You haven't guts enough to go out there tonight. You know enough, but you haven't guts enough. That's where we're different. If I had your experience—"

The blood drained out of Peery's face, and he lurched forward toward Norman.



"I can't deny the danger," Norman agreed reluctantly. "I never would have asked a man to attempt a flight I'd turned down; but with these people lost, I am asking it."

Anger rode him savagely, and he was trembling and white. "So," he said with a deadly sibilance, "you think that, do you? I'm a fool, but I want to go, and I want to see what you'll do when we get out there above the drink at night. If you've the guts to ride with me, I'll show you what I'll do."

For an instant Leslie Norman was absolutely motionless, except that his pale eyes jerked from Peery's face to the open window, and then down at his hands. He swallowed twice, and his mouth was working, and his dignity was a poor wilted thing.

"All right," he said a little thickly. "We'll get a seaplane and shove off."

"And to hell with the insurance bans, eh?" said Donald Peery with an unconcealed contempt.

IT seemed to him, as they drove swiftly toward MYCABA's seaplane base, that none but a fool would try to fly tonight. His mental condition was not fit for flying; he was being sucked into this through sheer anger, and he knew it. But he had been scorned, and he wanted to show this bilious egotist that it was unjustified. He wanted to erase a half-year of suffering in one glorious, dramatic vindication. That was part of it. The other part was rational, a very human, tender motive. He couldn't, really, stand by and make no effort to find that boy and girl—although prudence dictated a delay till morning, certainly.

Yet here they were, driving like mad in Norman's car, skirting Biscayne Bay to reach the base. Donald Peery had a sudden feeling that this night was to be the crisis of his life. This night would either kill him, out there in the dark, or it would break the jinx that had been dogging him. Thinking of that jinx, he had a crazy feeling of being here and yet not being here at all. In a few minutes he and Norman would be in the air, but now his mind turned back to this afternoon. . . .

The bay was a vast expanse of ink now, inscrutable, but this afternoon it had been very blue, ruffled darkly here and there by isolated puffs of wind, and dotted with white sails. Waiting in the operations building for his appointment with Leslie Norman, Peery had sat looking at the bay, feeling its beauty, drinking up the softness of the breeze and thinking that luck was with him here, at last. Somehow, respecting the whole

MYCABA organization, he had felt confident of a place within it, regardless of what had happened in the past.

THIS was a fresh beginning, with the slate wiped clean. There was a warm elation in that thought. He watched a biplane swoop in and leave a long white wake and turn and taxi toward the new Coast Guard hangar being built three hundred yards away. Fascinated, he watched a motor-launch chug out from the beaching ramp to meet it, carrying two mechanics in red bathing-suits. And he thought with an eager hopefulness, "Thank God, nobody's trying to railroad me, down here! If I can get on—"

The door of the operations manager's private office opened then, and a tall blonde secretary said quietly, "Mr. Norman is ready for you now, Mr. Peery."

Donald Peery brightened even more; he gave her a grateful look, and his eyes were nice when he looked that way. He went in. Norman, waiting for him behind a massive walnut desk, was a thin man with a long face and piercing blue eyes and a rather flabby skin, tanned brown. He met Peery's scrutiny with one equally acute; he said in a resonant tenor voice, "Draw up a chair."

Peery pulled a chair close to one corner of the desk and sat down. He tried to hide his eagerness, but that was impossible. There was so much at stake here now. He'd tried every other airline in the country, but MYCABA, and he had to get this job—he *had* to.

"I sent in an application a week or so ago," he said. "I understand you're putting on some pilots for a night run pretty soon."

"Not pilots," Norman corrected at once. "Co-pilots. MYCABA never hires pilots—they must come up from the ranks."

PEERY tried to smile his understanding and agreement. There seemed to be something intangibly hostile about Norman, and he tried to isolate it. The operations manager had a selfish face; he sat in an aura, somehow, of egotistic dogmatism. But Peery thought, "Probably my imagination—I don't know the man enough to judge." And he remembered a foolish saying about two personalities that didn't vibrate sympathetically, and guessed that might be the trouble now. It was disappointing. He watched the other rustle some papers on his desk.



Peery took no chance of delay; he drove a right hook to Norman's jaw, and grabbed the wheel.

Norman repeated, "You sent in an application? —Miss Considine,"—to the blonde secretary at the far end of the lengthy room,—“find this man's application.” He turned back to Peery. “What night experience have you had?”

Peery grinned, feeling comfortably capable of answering that. “At least four thousand hours,” he said. “Eight thousand hours total, sir.” He recognized the application form the secretary handed Norman as his own.

There was a brief pause while the operations manager gave the application cursory attention. Then he looked up with a faint start, his eyes narrowed. His tone had gone suddenly cold and smooth. “I'm afraid I didn't recognize your name, at first. Donald Peery, eh? . . . “No,”—shaking his head very emphatically, “I'm afraid we've nothing here for you.”

“Why,” said Peery, floundering a moment. “Why, with the night lines just starting, I—I thought I might get on as co-pilot, anyhow. Would you—would you mind telling me the reason, sir?”

A look of hesitation and distaste crossed Norman's face. “You were in some pretty 'serious trouble on Consolidated, weren't you, awhile back? You were dismissed?”

Acutely uncomfortable, Peery admitted: “Yes sir.”

“The air-lines keep in touch with one another fairly well. I know you've been turned down by most of them already. Since we're being frank about the matter, you might wish to give your version of the cause of the accident, although I shall not let that alter my decision. I would like to know, to avoid a similar affair upon my line.”

How many times he had gone over it, hopefully at first, now desperately! “I had a kid as my co-pilot who had a morbid fear of ground fog,” he said, “and I tried to teach him how to land down through it—to get him straightened out. And one night the boy made a mistake and let the airplane get away from him—and I wasn't fast enough to get control in time. Being the pilot, I was held responsible—discharged.”

Norman's long face remained immobile. “I read the underwriter's accident report. What about the accusation that you were in the cabin most of the trip talking with the woman passenger? Didn't she sue your company for your negligence, based largely upon that?”

Peery flushed hotly. “She was the only passenger,” he denied with a dogged sincerity, “and she was sick and I went back to help her.” He shrugged hopelessly. “She brought up my being back there with her, but I wasn't except when it was necessary—except when she rang for some one to come back. A shyster lawyer put her up to testifying what she did! Devine, the co-pilot, got a broken neck when we cracked up, so it was my word against the woman's—and you know what juries are. I was in the cockpit when the crash came. . . . For God's sake, won't *anybody* believe me when I tell the truth?”

NORMAN tossed the application into the basket marked “For File.” He got up from his chair. “No, Peery, it isn't any use. The insurance people have you blacklisted universally, and naturally the transport lines have no choice than to do the same, regardless of what their personal feelings may be in the matter. If you were to take a seaplane of ours off the water, the insurance on it would be voided automatically—that's how far their power goes. You're not a seaplane pilot anyhow.”

“But my experience!” Donald Peery said desperately. “I've put in eight thousand hours on an air-line, half of it at night, and just because—”

“Good afternoon,” said Leslie Norman.

So there was nothing left. The heart gone out of him, Peery turned away, and he didn't see the sympathetic look the tall blonde secretary gave him. All the old bitterness and feeling of frustration welled up in him once more as he walked to town. This was what you got for trying to help a youngster smooth out some of the kinks of weather flying. Oh, he was a fool, all right! He had let himself get caught between a woman's greed and the vastness of an insurance corporation. He couldn't fight back. He couldn't vindicate himself, so he was washed up, finished, thrown out on his ear.

What could he do now, he asked himself? Run liquor, maybe—no, he'd never get to that. It wasn't the job so much as it was his helplessness to prove that he had not been negligent. It felt like going to prison for a crime he didn't do. He reached his room and sat there staring out into the dusk.

And then, with a quick calling of his name, Leslie Norman had come in and found him there. Leslie Norman had said bluntly, as if there could be no possible thought of a refusal: "Quick, Peery! Quick! Let's get back to the base—there's a hundred dollars in a job for you—two kids in a little boat are lost off the coast up north. I want you to take a seaplane and go out hunting them. Come on!"

Donald Peery gave him a level look; deliberately he lit a cigarette. He had just been thinking that the ceiling had come down a lot in the past hour; the ceiling was of no special interest to him now, but watching it had grown to be a habit long ago. He had a half-baked impulse to throw Norman out the door; but a queer, distorted curiosity checked him and he waited, asking an unhurried question now and then.

IT was easy to picture that helpless boy and girl adrift in a little dory. It was easy to picture, and the picture touched him in a vital place; and he was for a moment tempted to start out, purely from human kindness in his heart. Yet he waited, delving deeper into Norman's mind. Why had they come to him? Who were the people in the boat? A director's daughter? Ah, now that explained, perhaps, the urgency of the operations manager's appeal!

"How can you send me, when the insurance companies will void the insurance on the plane?" he asked.

"The treasurer's department is trying to arrange for a special policy by telephone. If we can't get it, then that will be our hard luck if something happens."

"Interesting," said Donald Peery coldly, "to know that it is possible to get insurance on me. That must not be all the trouble, then. So you can go to the devil, Norman. If I had gone to work for you this afternoon, I'd go out there tonight and break my neck, if necessary, to do anything you said. But for a private job—for a hundred dollars? For seven years I've been on fast night runs—eight years flying nights. It's a little tough to get thrown out and slide back to a private pilot, jumping when my boss sings out at me. But one thing sure, I'll not start doing that for you!"

The gutter-pipe rattled in the wind, and a spit of rain whipped at the window. Donald Peery cursed, not understanding why he felt the need for that. He was thinking of those kids. Norman said something, and he didn't answer; and then he heard the words: "You haven't the guts to go." Waves of anger broke upon him, even while he knew he was a fool. He shouldn't go, but he heard his voice fling out the words:

"I'll go, if you'll go with me, Norman."

SO here they were together, side by side in the cockpit of the big bi-motored "Duck," and the wind was whispering gustily across the bay; and in a darkness so intense that it was palpable, the launch was towing them out of the slip into the clear. Already the engines were ticking over, muttering to themselves in their throaty undertones, and there was a kind of suppressed nervousness that seemed a tangible and rather dreadful thing within the plane, a thing against which Donald Peery had to steel himself.

He had gone on hundreds of night flights in bad weather, but none before that affected him like this. Always he had had full confidence in his ability, always he had had a deep respect for his co-pilot as a flying mate, a trust in the airplane he flew. Now all those things were missing. He was going to take off across a choppy bay and fight this night wind north, and finally out to sea—where anything could happen. He knew nothing of Norman's capabilities, and Norman worried him. Men do strange things in airplanes when under violent nervous pressure. And the plane itself—he had never flown a job like this before.

Yet the thing that concerned him more than any of the other factors was the improbability that they could do anything once they found the dory on that black sea. If the boat had running-lights, and the boy and girl down there had a flashlight to send signals, they could identify it easily enough—once located—for Norman had a car spotlight hooked up to the airplane's battery. But, even located and identified, what then could they do? Once down in a rough sea, this plane would stay down; it was no sea boat. Donald Peery shook his head, watching the sparse lights of Cape Florida wink through the drizzle. Norman, shivering against the clammy cold, said: "The launch has dropped our towing line." He opened the cockpit hatch and thrust his shoulders through, and coiled the line.

Peery watched the launch move to one side, indefinite except for the lights on bow and stern. Norman, a moment later, closed the hatch and locked it and sat down. "Okay!" he said. "It's time for us to go." There was a kind of strained uncertainty about his tone.

The take-off was a precarious, a dangerous thing. This seaplane had been built for day flying, and now the running-lights and the special spotlight and the parachute flares were the only night equipment it possessed. So the take-off was made "dark," which in this case meant altogether blind. Peery eased the throttles open, praying that he might strike no floating logs, no channel markers. The props bit hungrily into the air as the exhausts bellowed out across the bay. Tensely anxious, he helped the hull up to the step, where, in a series of spine-shattering jolts, it spanked itself to flying speed while spray and rain and darkness seemed plastered heavily upon the windshield glass.

THEN they were off, gathering speed above the obsidian sheet of water. Peery drew a long breath, and realized only then he had been holding it. He looked across the cockpit in a quick glance, and saw Leslie Norman straining his eyes ahead into the dark, face a tense greenish hue behind the board lights. They climbed slowly until suddenly the running-lights glowed brightly at four hundred feet as the Duck surged upward into the bottom of the clouds. Peery leveled off and swung over the smear of lights that was Miami Beach, and then along the coast. To the east was the blank curtain of darkness that connected

sky and sea, unbroken, forbidding, a black desolation that reached three thousand miles to Spain.

It was a relief, however, to be off and on the way. The indecision and the anxious estimation of the situation both were past; they were in the air, and there would be no turning back until they found the dory or the Duck ran low on gas.

YET a dozen questions were in Peery's mind. The ceiling here was a scant four hundred feet.

What if it got lower farther north? What if this whole coast fogged in? He found his hands a little damp from tension, thinking of that. And there were other things. What if one motor quit, when they were far at sea, and blind? Could he fly this crate then, when one moment of inattention to the instruments would send them smashing down? What if they landed and cracked up and the Duck sank? He had spent years on night mail, but he never before had flown quite this low for prolonged distances, and it gnawed at his nerves.

"Morbid imagination," he thought, trying to get control. He'd always had it. In younger days, when he'd never flown at night before, he'd sometimes thought his mind was going screwy. He'd thought he'd gotten over that, but this was just as bad, or worse. He fished out a crumpled cigarette and found a match, and yelled across the cockpit aisle: "Take her for a minute while I fire up!"

So for a minute he leaned back in his seat, trying to force a relaxation of his muscles—a relaxation that refused to come. He watched Norman's profile an instant, and he could detect in the other man the same sort of nervous apprehension that was eating at him, too. Quickly he struck a match and cupped his hands around it, at his cigarette, then leaned back and inhaled deeply.

Just then he sensed a change in the cadence of the engines, a gradual acceleration and a growling loss of synchronization—as if the Duck had entered quickly in a turn. Yet he hadn't felt a turn. He opened his eyes, trying to see a light ahead. There was none, only blankness that pressed against the glass. He looked down at the turn-and-bank. For an imperceptible space of time, during which he seemed frozen in his seat in a cataleptic fright, his eyes interpreted the instruments upon the board.

The turn needle was off center to the

right, and the rate-of-climb was showing six hundred feet a minute down—and already the altimeter was below the two-hundred-foot mark.

He half turned in his seat to yell at Norman. The operations manager was sitting rigid there, leaning tensely forward, his big hands choking the control wheel. Donald Peery took no chances of interference or delay. He drove a hard right hook to Norman's jaw and at the same instant grabbed the wheel. As Norman slumped away, Peery kicked left rudder hard and hauled the wheel back violently.

Sheer terror came over him in waves, when the Duck had leveled out and was slowly climbing back again. How closely they had missed the water he would never know, but the altimeter had read zero for an instant in the bottom of its dive. The pounding of his heart left him light-headed. He climbed until the running-lights glowed bright in the clouds, and sat there cursing silently.

They were past Palm Beach now, flying low along that area of coast where the only lights were from the cars which thread along the narrow highway near the beach. Tonight, there were no cars. Peery presently turned back from northeast to straight north, heading gradually to sea to start the search off Vero Beach.

NORMAN, slumped in his seat, stirred and sat up, demanding groggily, "What happened? Did we crash?"

Donald Peery laughed immoderately in scorn. It wasn't funny, but he laughed. "Where did *you* learn to fly blind?" he yelled. "Under a hood? You got us in a spiral back there and were headed for the water, freezing the controls, you fool!"

Norman rubbed his jaw as realization came to him. "All you had to do was yell at me to give them back to you," he said indignantly.

"And let an opportunity like that slip by? Norman, you don't know my deep regard for you!"

There was no answer. Peery said no more, for ahead, stretched over an area of three or four miles, were the tiny lights of several boats. He circled, and Norman was recovered sufficiently to stab the spotlight down through the right window as the plane surged past each one. Lights from down there blinked in answer. There was no dory here. Peery cut back toward the north, puzzling. The lights dropped swiftly

out of sight, leaving the sea an unfathomable abyss above which the overcast hung low.

Presumably, the dory had put out from Vero Beach due east. From Norman's information, DuBois' cruiser was only five or six miles offshore at the most. The dory had an outboard motor and ample fuel to have gone out that far and back. The questions were: where had it gone instead of coming back? And: drifting, which way would it go?

There was no answer to the first. To the second, Peery presumed that the little craft might have reached the Gulf Stream, considerably offshore—twenty or even twenty-five miles. A northeast wind was blowing, but it had not been strong until this evening.

"How fast does the Gulf Stream flow?" he shouted at Norman.

"About two miles an hour. But they're not in the Stream!"

PEERY lapsed into silence. It seemed likely to him that if the dory hadn't reached the Stream, it would have drifted back toward land slowly in the wind. In that case, with all those boats down there in steady search, it would have been sighted before this. So it seemed to him that the boy must have kept running east looking for the cruiser, and got out farther than he meant to do—out into the current of the Stream—and drifted north. In the long hours since that time, he could have drifted seventy or eighty miles—far north of Cape Canaveral, and a long, long way from where the search was centered now.

They passed Canaveral ten miles offshore, and the lighthouse beam was a blurred wink that came four times in slow succession before being swallowed in the mist. Norman saw it.

"You'd better turn around," he said, and the words were spoken as an order, not as a suggestion. "We're way north of the area of search."

"And we're going to get still farther north. The Stream flows fifty miles or so offshore north of the Cape."

"No sense of going up there!" Norman protested critically. "You're wasting our time."

"Your time—not mine. I'm going where I think that dory went."

There was a brief pause. "You're the pilot," Norman said sourly. "But I still don't—"

"You're damn' right I'm the pilot. If you were the pilot, we'd be in the bottom

of the drink by now. So if you'll shut up and start looking for that dory, I'll see if I can find it."

Norman hesitated, as if framing a retort. Then he shaded his eyes from the instrument lights and peered ahead into the dark.

Peery, with quick glances down, was able to distinguish long windrows of ghostly pallid phosphorescence—savage graybeards marching in across the shoals. How could a dory live down there in that rough water? It seemed impossible. And his hope dwindled as they roared on mile after mile and saw no light.

Yet doggedly he kept on searching. He turned due east for twenty minutes, until he was positive that he had passed the Stream, and then swung back, making a zigzag track that put him within visual touch with every square mile of the Atlantic in that area. He couldn't give up. In his mind had grown a picture of those two youngsters in that boat, a boy, haggard and wan, bailing valiantly; a girl, helping, and searching the horizon with a hungry, tired gaze. Thinking of them changed his whole outlook on the world.

BUT it grew hopeless as the hours passed. Not minutes—hours. Midnight came and went; they had crossed the Stream eleven times. Donald Peery knew now when they crossed the Stream. At the edge of it, the temperature went up from fifty-one to fifty-five, and the visibility increased materially, and the mist stopped. The clouds grew flat on the bottom, making a perceptible horizon. But it was no use. They were a long, long way from Cape Canaveral. No boat could have drifted this far north in the length of time the dory had been missing. It was one o'clock. . . . Then it was two o'clock. . . . Then—

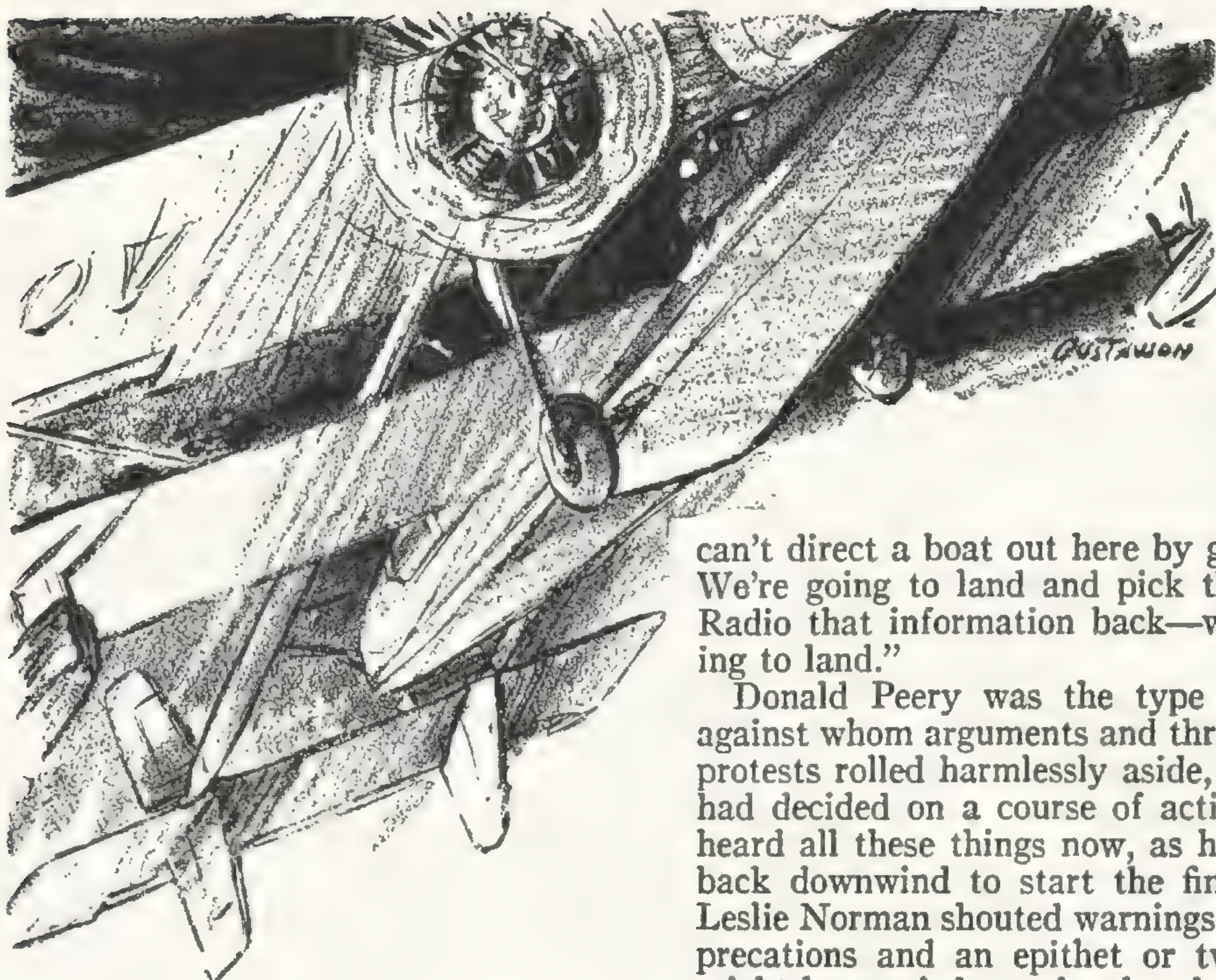
Then Leslie Norman was crying something in a wild voice that brought a tingle to Donald Peery's scalp: "Straight ahead! A small light flared—went out!"

Peery strained his eyes. He had been looking all the time, but he focused now straight ahead into the blackness. And he saw the same thing come again—a sudden flare of light that flickered bravely and died down.

As the Duck roared over, Norman played the spotlight down upon the sea—and they both saw the little craft in a momentary glimpse. It was the dory, beyond doubt. They could see a figure lying in the bottom, a small shapeless



As the Duck dived back through the clouds, the flares were swinging on their parachutes. Tossed in the backwash of a swell the dory rode, not two hundred yards away.



figure; crouched in the stern was another figure, waving frantically as the beam flicked over him.

Donald Peery, very cool, banked and came around, flying by his instruments so perfectly that one wing cut through the clouds. Coming back, crosswind, he couldn't see much, for Norman was standing in the cockpit now, working with the spotlight, and the back-flare from it blinded him. But as the Duck charged over, he got a fragmentary picture once more; he saw the boat, and the figure, and he saw the long, rolling swells that roared white-crested across the surface of the sea. He grew troubled as he considered going down into that smother.

The light down there was burning steadily now, so weak and meager that it scarcely revealed the outline of the boat. But it marked the position for the plane. As Peery circled, Norman studied his chart quickly and yelled:

"I'll radio back that we've found 'em. We can't land and get off again, so we'll circle until a boat can get out here."

"What position are you giving?" Peery asked.

"About fifty miles northeast of Can-
a-veral, in the middle of the Stream."

Peery shook his head, throttling the left engine to synchronize it with the right. "That's not accurate within thirty miles. I don't know where we are. You

can't direct a boat out here by guessing. We're going to land and pick them up. Radio that information back—we're going to land."

Donald Peery was the type of man against whom arguments and threats and protests rolled harmlessly aside, once he had decided on a course of action. He heard all these things now, as he swung back downwind to start the final turn. Leslie Norman shouted warnings and imprecations and an epithet or two. He might have tried to take the plane from Peery's grasp, had he been confident of his ability to fly it in this weather.

"A Duck isn't a sea boat!" he bel-
lowed in a frenzy. "You'll never get off if you go down. You'll kill us and you won't save them. We can go back and take on gas and come out at day-
light and circle till a boat can come."

Peery made no answer. He leveled the Duck out, hurtling downwind across the swells at a scant four hundred feet, and with his right hand found the flare release-controls. He saw the flicker of the dory light below, and with the position fixed in mind, swept on into the darkness, pulling up a little now.

IT was a desperate venture, and he knew that well enough. It had to be accomplished with meticulous precision, or they'd end up in a heap. Everything took place so rapidly that he moved with a machine-like deliberation that was really haste. The running-lights bloomed in their halos suddenly, and with that notice Peery zoomed the Duck, wheel a little back, watching the turn indicator as he went up, blind. The air speed dropped to eighty miles, and he snapped his wrist twice on the flare control, forward and backward, two quick jerks. Behind him he heard two faint clicks as the flares were projected out into the air. Then, with a smooth breathlessness, he swung over in a ver-

tical and rolled out and nosed down, almost all at once.

As the Duck dived back through the clouds, the scene was one of almost dreadful beauty. The sea was spread out in a tumbling disarray of inky swells, white-crested. Just below the clouds the flares were swinging on their parachutes, dazzling with their cold white radiance. Almost straight ahead, tossed at that moment in the backwash of a swell, the dory rode, not two hundred yards away.

BUT they were not down yet; Peery knew that to get down safely he would have to perform almost a miracle. Excitement gave him for a moment a kind of superhuman judgment. He glided, engines clucking in their stacks. It was as light as day, but the glare here was not the kind of light emitted by the sun. It was a terrific blue light, somehow ghastly. By it, he judged the rhythm of the swells, and picked a trough and killed his speed and started a quick turn to slide into the water a little off the wind.

As they landed, he had a queer feeling that everything was happening at once, and that he had lost control. The left pontoon clipped the white crest of a comber, and he reacted on the rudder without knowing that he did so. The right wing went down exactly as it should have done, timed perfectly, although it seemed to him he had not moved the wheel. And then, before he could react to the realization that they were settling in a stall, the hull struck with a furious impact on a vast obsidian slope of sea. At that moment, he felt the rudder pedals collapse beneath his feet.

Norman shouted something, but the rush of water drowned his words. The Duck slowed so violently that it threw Peery forward in his belt. They stopped, and the flares were almost touching the black crests of the sea, drifting downward like twin meteors in a queer suspension. Peery realized that the nose of the plane was unusually depressed, now that they were down—and he realized suddenly that something had happened to the tail. At that moment, the flares plunged into the water; their hiss was audible against the moaning of the wind.

For a space of time that seemed to grow prolonged, both men sat rigid in their seats, feeling the motion of the plane as it plunged across the swells.

Then Norman, light in hand, got up suddenly, threw the cockpit hatch open and thrust his head outside. The light went on, the spill of it flooded down into the cockpit over Peery's tired face. Norman's voice rose in a raw exclamation of dismay.

"My God!" There was a silence, with the water lapping at the hull. "We're wrecked!" Norman said in disbelief. "You damn' fool—you landed crosswind and you've smashed our tail! We're wrecked, I tell you! Take a look at that!"

Donald Peery took the light, and replaced Norman in the hatchway; there was not room for both of them. The probing finger of the beam showed clearly what had happened. The tail group of this plane was built as an outrigger—on two long struts that extended aft some twenty feet, braced by smaller struts and wires. The whole of it was demolished now. The stabilizer and the rudders were shapeless masses of dural and fabric, half submerged.

He knew what this meant, well enough, and he could see that Norman knew it too. They were at least forty miles offshore, and maybe fifty. There was a strong northeaster which was swinging to the east, that was soon to be a gale, if it kept rising. In the sharp beam from the spotlight he could see spindrift whipping off the swell crests. Norman had been right. They couldn't save those kids now, because they couldn't save themselves. But there was a peculiar satisfaction in knowing that they'd done their best, instead of running back to safety. He turned the beam ahead, and found the dory bobbing there a hundred feet away.

HE could see now what was the matter. He could see the boy, and the huddled shape of the girl; and the boy was kneeling in the bow of the boat paddling with an oar. Not rowing, paddling. He had only one oar. That was why he'd not been able to work back toward land, because he'd lost one oar. Peery shuddered suddenly when he saw a fin slice through black water a dozen yards away.

"Can you make it over here?" he yelled.

The boy didn't answer, but he was making it, all right. It took a long time, and Donald Peery could see that he was just about all in. A few more hours of this exposure and he wouldn't

have been able to hold onto the paddle. Pity touched Peery, waiting there; he felt like crying for that boy, and instead of that, he cursed. He heard Norman, in the cockpit, mutter something, but he didn't listen.

As he waited, holding the light, he discovered that he had to swing the beam to hold it on the boat. As the beam swung, the motion of the plane changed gradually. Instead of heading into the swells, it was rotating. A swell smacked the left pontoon with a dull "*thwack-whoosh*," and then the hull. A violent alarm took hold of Donald Peery suddenly, when he realized that a few more swells like that would knock off the left pontoon. He knew what that would do. He wasn't an experienced seaplane pilot, but he had heard it talked about. A Duck wouldn't float with either wing pontoon removed. It would sink, and it wouldn't take very long about it. Another swell struck with a shuddering impact.

THE dory was alongside now, the bow scraping the Duck's nose with each change in level of the water. Peery yelled against the wind, "Can you make fast a line?" and threw out the tow line that Norman had coiled up. The boy caught it, moving slowly. He was weak. Here in the close light, his face was drawn and white. It was a square face, a nice face with courage in it. But the boy was just about exhausted. He made the line fast, and he fell down doing it,—he almost fell overboard, but caught himself. He turned around and helped the girl to her feet. Donald Peery was startled at her condition. She was almost unconscious, and her feet dragged on the bottom of the boat. She had a childlike oval face, about which her wet brown hair was matted darkly.

"Get her to hold up her hands to you," Norman, from below, called out to Peery. There wasn't enough room out on the nose for both of them. The girl held up her arms, weakly. Peery gripped her wrists and hauled her up. Norman helped her down into the cabin. Peery helped the boy up, and the dory drifted out of the beam of light. Another swell struck the plane a hard blow from the side just then.

Down in the cabin, the boy and girl were too worn out to show much interest in their surroundings. They thought they were safe, and the boy kept muttering, "Thank God you saw us!" and explained: "I heard the plane go past in

two directions, but I couldn't light the lantern in the wind." He sighed and settled down into the cushion of his seat, exhausted. "The lantern was almost out of oil and I was saving it until I saw a light somewhere. . . . Thank God!" He looked at the girl, and there was an infinite tenderness in his weary smile.

Peery looked at Norman questioningly. Now that they were all here together in this critical position, he didn't feel so bitter toward the other man. The things between them in the past were trivial. The future, holding life, or death, seemed to level barriers. He asked Norman, "What are we going to do?" and made a movement with his head toward the cockpit, out of hearing of the other two. "Without the tail to hold us into the wind, this tub is turning broadside to the swells. A pontoon will be knocked off—"

All the arrogance was gone from Norman's face. He showed no evidence of fear. His face was tense, yet oddly softened, Peery thought. Peery had the sudden feeling, so in contradiction to his previous impressions, that Norman was a man of sound, substantial judgment and perceptions. He might not be a pilot, but he could think straight on the ground.

"Our only hope, of course, is to hold the plane headed into the wind," Norman said. "The position I gave by radio may be wrong, but if the search can be narrowed to fifteen or twenty miles, a boat may get here before the pontoons let go." He sat down suddenly at the controls. Peery had cut off the engines, but Norman started them again, and tried, by using the motors alternately, to swing the plane back into the wind. They bobbed drunkenly across the swells, but it didn't work; the plane either turned too far, or not enough. It was hopeless. To stay into the wind they'd have to taxi steadily ahead, away from shore. Even if they did that, it would be but a temporary measure; the gas would be exhausted soon. . . . After Norman snapped the switches off, the bow bumped heavily against the dory half a dozen times.

AND with that sound, Peery cried: "Hey! We've got a strong east wind now. How about using the dory as a sea anchor with a line to our bow, and the wind will blow the ship backward against the taut line—nosed into the seas? This high top wing—we ought to drift five miles an hour, in this gale!"

"The dory will fill and sink in a few minutes," Norman pointed out. "Then the line will part from the strain, and we'll be where we started. I dunno—"

"I do," Peery said. He dived back into the cabin, coming back with a motor cover. He opened the hatch, and climbed through and hauled the dory line in, hand over hand. It was pretty dark, even with Norman shining the spotlight through the window, but he could see that the boat was half filled with water already. He tossed the motor cover to the bottom, and climbed down, feeling terribly isolated as the seaplane drifted backward in the wind. But a moment later, as the line went taut, he could tell that the plane had swung back into the wind, and triumphantly he yelled:

"See that? We're going to town!"

He sat down on the middle seat and started bailing. Used to the darkness now, he could see the oily swells, the foam a pallid white stuff that roared tumbling down the hills. It made him shudder to think of sitting here for forty hours, as that boy and girl had done. His feet were submerged, and the wind was piercing. Finally, with the motor cover as a cape, he huddled there, holding on against the slam and pitch of each repeated swell, bailing when a wave slopped over the stern, feeling the slack come and then jerk out of the line—feeling, with an increasing satisfaction, the steady movement of the dory as the seaplane drifted on the wind.

It took a long time. A long time that seemed eternity, that was filled with the agony of the cold, and the uncertainty. The night wore itself out and turned to a gray and cheerless dawn. Hunger and fatigue assailed him. He was out of cigarettes, but he could not have smoked them anyhow, for his lips were burned by the salt wind. But toward noon, after he had refused for the third time to relinquish this solitary post to Norman, for fear the plane might swing dangerously during the transfer, he saw a low green coast materialize across the bleak and windy reaches of the sea.

THEY sat in the beamed living-room of DuBois' winter home below Sebastian; the booming of the Atlantic was a background for the pleasant crackling of pine logs in the fireplace before them. Ann DuBois and Hensley Moreland were upstairs, improving under a physician's care; DuBois, fifty and pleasant in a

florid, hearty way, had sat for two hours with Peery and Norman, spinning and listening to flying tales.

Now, suddenly, he took up a more important matter. He said, "Peery, it is a damned unfortunate thing about the insurance rulings against you. But perhaps I can clear that up through some of my connections. I've been thinking you're the man I'm looking for." He paused, to laugh heartily. "For a stockholder in a pretty big air-line," he went on, "I'm an awful coward. But recently I've decided it would be safe enough to fly, if I had my own plane and pilot. So, insurance or no insurance, you're going to work for me."

WARM elation flooded into Donald Peery's veins, then flowed out again. After eight years on a night mail run, he didn't want a private flying job.

"We're starting a couple of thousand miles of night lines," Norman said to DuBois. He displayed again that crisp, efficient manner that Peery had first seen, and so disliked, the day before. But Peery's reaction to it now was changed.

"You mean you'll want him for that?" DuBois rumbled. "Well, you can't have him, because—"

To Peery's astonishment, Norman interrupted with, "I've already hired him, pending the adjustment of the insurance restrictions. It would be very greatly against precedent for you to hire him away from me. With his night-flying experience—"

"But dammit, man, here I've hesitated about flying for five years, and when I find the one pilot I have confidence in, you beat me to him! You can't do that! You can get other pilots, but I want this man!"

Peery gave Leslie Norman a quick, grateful look. Norman understood how he would have hated flying DuBois and a lot of millionaires around. . . . A mutual respect seemed to have sprung up suddenly between the operations manager and himself, without a single spoken word. He remembered that silly saying about two personalities vibrating sympathetically—and he decided that maybe there was something to it after all. Filled with a new, deep kind of happiness, he murmured out of one corner of his mouth, so DuBois could neither see nor hear:

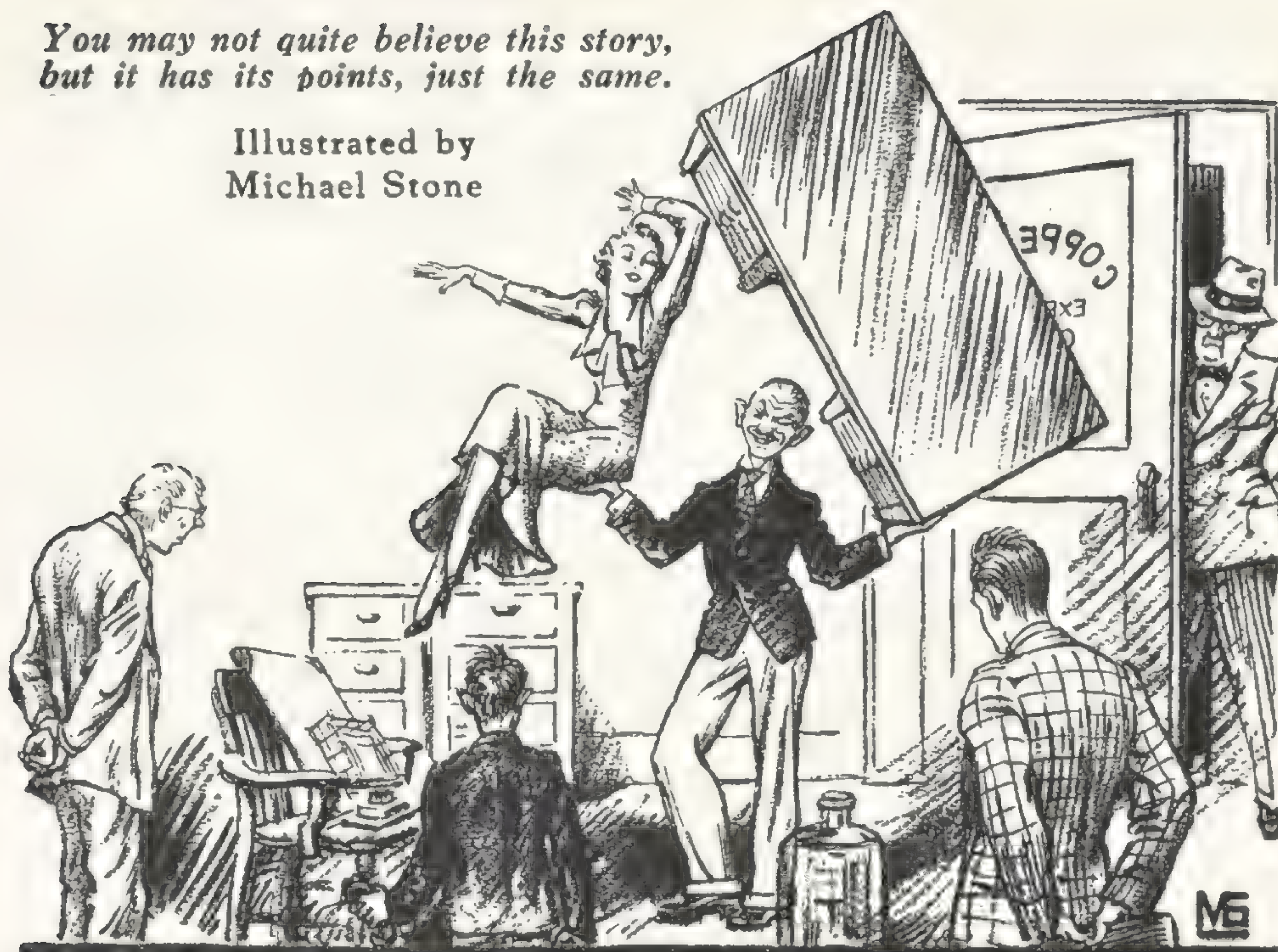
"Thanks!"

Leslie Norman slyly closed one eye.

Another of Mr. Jamieson's fine stories of air adventure will appear in an early issue.

*You may not quite believe this story,
but it has its points, just the same.*

Illustrated by
Michael Stone



Pachydermo

By E. G. WHEELER

I CANNOT imagine what this country is coming to when a man can be arrested and sent to a place like this just because he talked to a friend in a public park. Despite the NRA, the Democrats, and the pretended solicitude for the Forgotten Man, I believe there is some sinister influence at work in our great country when such a thing can happen. And it can happen! It happened to me the other day while I was conversing with Arthur Tripp.

But I am diverging from my subject. Indeed, properly speaking, the outrage committed on my person is but an aftermath of the amazing experience that befell my friend Arthur Tripp.

It began one Sunday afternoon when I went to the beach with Art and his wife. For a couple of hours we had a pretty nice time playing in the water, lying in the sand, eating hot dogs and drinking pop. When we'd had enough, we just flopped on the beach, watching the other bathers. . . . I grew drowsy.

I was almost asleep when Art spoke. "What are you mooning and sighing about, Marge?" he asked. "Did those hot dogs upset you?"

"No," she answered.

"What is it, then?" Art persisted.

"All right, Mr. Nosey," Marge said, "if you must know, I was looking at that lifeguard."

We both sat up and looked. He was sitting under an umbrella on top of one of those little stands.

"That guy!" Art laughed. "What're you looking at him for?"

Marge merely mooned at the lifeguard again and sighed: "Gee, he's handsome!"

"What? You hear that, Ralph? That guy's handsome." Art fell back on the sand and roared. "Handsome! Look at those big ears. Why, if that bird's feet weren't so big that they'd sink the boat, you could use him for a mast and his ears for sails."

Marge shot Art one of those wifely looks that I've learned is the signal to

leave before the slaughter begins. But where can you go, when half the city is parked on the beach? I just flattened out on the sand and waited.

"Darling," Marge said,—and my toes curled into the sand,—"darling, I wasn't looking at his profile. I was looking at his big strong arms, his big thick chest, and his big long legs. His body," she finished dreamily, "is like a Greek god's."

Art stopped laughing, with a gurgle that sounded as though somebody had thrown a handful of sand in his throat. It was easy to see that he didn't like what Marge had said. I think that Art's being a skinny little runt didn't make him like it any better. And Art was skinny. If you had put him next to Gandhi,—with fewer teeth and a white loin-cloth instead of blue bathing-trunks,—you would have had to test them with goat's milk to tell the two apart.

However, Art didn't say anything. After that one gurgle he shut up. By then the party was killed, so it didn't matter. We dressed and went home.

IT has been my custom for years to be the first person at the office, but Art met me at the door on Monday morning.

He gripped my arm and said: "Ralph, come in here!"

I thought at the moment that something had happened to Marge, he sounded so excited. But when I put my glasses on, I saw that it couldn't be that, because he was grinning like a baboon.

He led me to the water-cooler that stood near his desk. There was a full five-gallon bottle of mineral water on the floor beside the cooler. He reached down, grabbed that big bottle by the neck with his right hand, and lifted it as easily as if it had been a pint of milk.

"Watch, Ralph!"

With no discernible effort, Art extended the bottle at arm's-length, then raised it over his head. After repeating these movements while holding the bottle in his left hand, he started tossing the bottle in the air and catching it, first with one hand, then the other.

"Well, what do you think of me?" he asked, looking at me out of the corner of his eye as he put the bottle on the floor.

"What in blazes have you been doing, Art?" was all that I could say.

"It's Pachydermo," he said.

"What is Pachydermo?"

"'Pachydermo,'" Art quoted, "'puts iron in the blood, livens the liver, tones

and invigorates the muscles, soothes and regulates the bowels, banishes brain-fatigue, corrects eye-strain and bad breath, strengthens the entire bodily structure. It will make the sick and ailing, hale and hearty. It will make the strong and healthy as vigorous as wild elephants.'" He caught his breath. "In fact, Pachydermo has the stuff it takes. Gosh, has it got influence!"

I sat down in a chair and removed my glasses.

"Art," I said, "just sit down and relax. It's I, your old friend Ralph, that's with you. Just be quiet. Everything is going to be all right."

Laughing so hard that I was afraid he would split something, Art came over to me.

"Honest, I'm not screwy," he protested. "Besides, you saw what I did. Listen—"

Although it took some time, I finally got the straight of it. That is, if there is any straight to such a screwy story.

It seems that when Marge and Art had got back to their apartment the night before, they weren't on very friendly terms. After sitting around for a while glaring at each other, Marge had gone to bed. Art had stayed up to read the paper. In the paper he had seen the advertisement for Pachydermo.

Art told me that it was the elephant that had sold him the stuff. To a man who couldn't pick a petunia without working up a sweat, the elephant had appeared mighty grand and strong pulling up an oak tree with his trunk. That, together with his injured feelings, had made him Pachydermo-conscious, and conquered his conviction that such tonics were worthless.

Regardless of the cause, the result is fact. Art had hurried to the corner drug-store and had paid three dollars for a bottle of Pachydermo. On his return he had taken a tablespoonful and had gone to bed.

ART said that in the morning he had felt just as usual—that is, lousy; if anything, more so than normally. It was while dressing that he had discovered the change.

He had been putting on his right shoe (Art wore high shoes because of weak ankles) when something had seemed to give. He had looked down, and to his amazement he found that he had shoved his foot all the way through his shoe. I mean that the sole had remained at-

tached to the upper only by a few threads at the toe. The upper itself was around the calf of Art's leg.

Naturally, Art had let out a yell that brought Marge running from the kitchen. They had examined the shoe, and Marge had made a few remarks about shoe-manufacturers. Art had put on another pair of shoes pretty carefully, because he had begun to guess at the truth.

Confirmation of his suspicions had come a moment later while he was trying to put a collar-button into his shirt. Of course, he had dropped the button, which had skittered under the chiffonier and stopped against the molding.

Annoyed, Art had forgotten that he was no longer the same man. A quick jerk, and the chiffonier had flown through the air, barely missing Marge. Amid her screams and the clatter of falling plaster, it had smashed into kindling-wood against the opposite wall.

When I had heard this much, I wasn't positive that either of us was sane. As a test I asked to see the tonic. Art had it: a big bottle labeled "*Pachydermo*" with a picture of a purple elephant pulling up a tree.

I smelled of the oily brown liquid. It smelled pretty ripe, something like rancid butter. Art said that it tasted pretty ripe too, but more like corn liquor with kerosene in it, than butter.

BY this time it was a quarter of nine, and the rest of the office force began to arrive. Since Art was so proud and pleased, he had to show off his tricks. He invented some new ones too.

At ten o'clock when Mr. Goss, the president, arrived, Art was balancing a desk with one hand and using Miss Peasely, Mr. Goss' secretary, for a dumb-bell with the other.

That called for explanations. Art started to explain by showing Mr. Goss the water-bottle trick. Unfortunately, when he came to the tossing part of it, he let his enthusiasm carry him away. He threw the bottle so high that it hit the ceiling and shattered. A big piece of the bottle fell on Mr. Goss and knocked him out, but most of the five gallons of mineral water fell on him also. That brought him to; and when he revived, he fired us both.

We didn't care much. Art was too excited, and I had had a big idea.

In order to show Mr. Goss that we didn't care, Art took a sip of *Pachydermo* while we were putting on our coats; then,



as we left, he slammed the door so hard that he shoved the doorknob clean through the door.

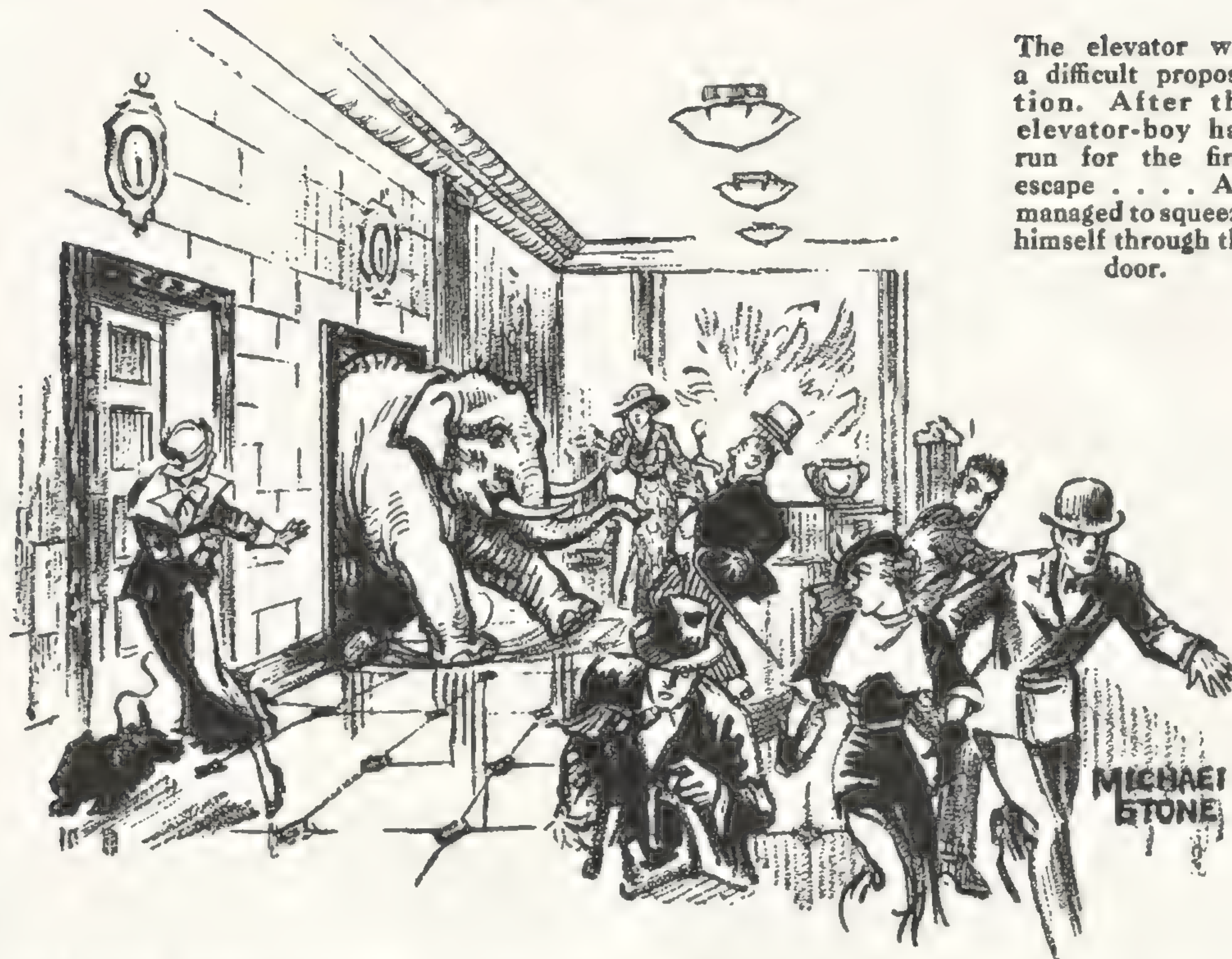
FOR the next month we did well financially. I took charge of Art; and for a steady job I signed him up with some automobile people who wanted to advertise the sturdy construction of their car. Each day Art would toss a sedan twenty or thirty feet into the air, or perhaps smack a coupé against a tree to prove to the public how strongly they were made.

And along with plenty of money, we got lots of publicity. That aided us to pick up odd jobs like moving safes into skyscrapers. I remember that we drew down a thousand dollars for our first job of that kind. That safe weighed five tons, and it had to be carried to the twenty-fifth floor. I was afraid Art couldn't do it. But he did. He even stopped on the seventeenth floor while I lighted his pipe for him. . . .

Despite the money, the notoriety and the thrill of being big shots, everything wasn't smooth during those four weeks. For one thing, Art had been taking *Pachydermo* every night to keep up his strength, and after two weeks, when the bottle was half gone, he wanted more. But we couldn't get more!

It's unbelievable, I know; but there was no *Pachydermo* to be found. We went to every drug-store in town, including the one where Art had got his bottle, but no one had ever heard of *Pachydermo*.

And this is the queerest part of a queer business. The manager of the store where Art said that he had got the *Pachydermo* told me that he had never had a



The elevator was a difficult proposition. After the elevator-boy had run for the fire-escape Art managed to squeeze himself through the door.

clerk who would answer to the description that Art gave us. Explain that, if you can!

Both of us grew scared and jumpy. I was afraid because the whole affair was uncanny. I couldn't figure out where that first bottle had come from. But there it was. My common sense told me that no tonic could have such an effect on a man as Pachydermo had on Art. But there *he* was. The eeriness of it got me.

Of course, Art never thought of that side of the thing. His sole fear was that when his bottle of Pachydermo was finished, his strength would vanish. I know now that his fear was unfounded.

Marge, I believe, was even more upset than we, though for still another reason. Her constant complaint was that she had married a man, not the human steam-roller that Art had become. I suppose she had cause. Practically every day Art would pull a door from its hinges, or break a chair or a table while exercising. Once, when he stubbed his toe on a stool, he angrily kicked it through the wall into the next apartment.

Still, Marge had to take it; for in the final analysis it was her fault: she had brought it on herself that Sunday at the beach.

The end came two days after Art drank his last few drops of Pachydermo. . . . It came with lightning suddenness.

The three of us were sitting in the living-room after dinner. I was trying to think of some place to get Pachydermo, But Marge and Art were engaged in a new phase of the squabble that they had been carrying on for four weeks, so I didn't get much thinking done.

Marge complained that Art had not eaten the roast that we had had for dinner. Art came back with the statement that he had lost his appetite, and that he didn't like meat, anyway.

THAT gave me something else to think over. Quite suddenly I realized that Art was partially speaking the truth. He hadn't lost his appetite, to be sure, for he had been stowing away vegetables by the bale; but he had hardly touched meat for the two weeks past, and that wasn't the old Art by a long shot. However, he had done pretty well on spinach and carrots, for he had gained thirty-three pounds. We had had to buy him a complete new outfit of clothing.

"You know," Art announced, breaking a long silence, "it has just come to me what I would like to eat: some tender green grass."

"Who do you think you are?" I asked, leaning my head on my hands. "Nebuchadnezzar?"

"I mean it," he answered. "Honest, Ralph, I've changed in lots of ways since I got that Pachydermo. You remember

what a lousy memory I used to have? Well, I can remember things for years back now. I even remember that I didn't like to ride in a baby carriage when I was a baby."

"Why not?" Marge asked.

"It made me sick."

"You make me sick," I told him. "Can that stuff. You can't remember that far back. Nobody can."

"I can, Ralph," he insisted. "Lately I can remember everything that ever happened to me. I've got a memory like a—like an elephant."

Marge screamed. I looked up and I almost screamed too.

"My God!" I shouted. "Art—you *are* an elephant!"

And he was. There he sat on the lounge, his ears flapping and his proboscis waving. When I shouted, he twisted his thick neck so that he could see himself.

"Why, so I am, Ralph!" he trumpeted. He rose to his feet and examined himself in the pier-glass. "Not as large as some, Ralph, but a damn' fine specimen, if I may say so."

Well! You may try to imagine, but you'll never know the time I had for the next three days. Marge had hysterics like Old Faithful squirting water. Art wanted green grass by the bale, and to top it off, he wanted to practice trumpeting. I almost had to gag him. How would you gag an elephant, I wonder.

It became clear to all three of us at the same time that things couldn't remain as they were. We held a conference, and decided that Art had to go.

Art, of course, wanted to join a circus, so that he could travel and have an opportunity to show off. But Marge held out for the Zoo. She said that if Art were there, she would know that he was safe and not subject to abuse. That irritated Art. He trumpeted a little and said that he would like to see anyone abuse him. Marge had hysterics again.

FINALLY Art gave in. I called up the Zoo, and they agreed to take him. I thought my troubles were over, but they were just starting.

In the first place, Art was too big for the door. Art solved that dilemma by putting his head against the wall and pushing. The elevator was a difficult proposition. After the elevator-boy had run for the fire-escape, Marge and I went in the car. Art finally managed to squeeze himself through the door on his

knees. Then he worked the controls with his trunk.

When we got in the street, I remembered that I hadn't ordered a moving-van as I had intended. Art said that he would rather walk, anyway, so after he had thrown the apartment-manager, who was making a good bit of fuss, through the second-story window, he put Marge and me on his back and started for the Zoo.

ABOUT six months after Art went to the Zoo, I found out Marge was getting a divorce. She had charged Art with desertion, and was going to marry Adolph Pillow, the Armless and Legless Wonder!

When I accused her of being faithless, she told me that she couldn't remain the wife of an elephant for the rest of her life. She said that she was marrying Pillow because he had never been able to grow arms and legs, so the odds were against his growing a trunk and turning into an elephant.

To my surprise, Art didn't appear upset to hear Marge was divorcing him.

"I will not contest the case, Ralph," he said. He tossed a peanut from the bag I had brought him, to a young lady elephant named Annabelle. "Marge is right. We are no longer kindred souls."

I remonstrated in vain. Plainly, Art was not interested in Marge. The reason became clear to me when I saw the disgusting manner in which he carried on with the elephant Annabelle. After hitting her playfully with his trunk, he turned to me and said: "Have you ever seen more beautiful eyes, Ralph?"

That was the last straw. When I told him what I thought of his conduct, we had a bitter quarrel. If you have ever quarreled with an elephant, you will know that it was rather noisy. So I was arrested.

Poor Art! He has Annabelle, I suppose, but I'm afraid he misses me. After all, an elephant can hardly be very interesting to talk to, even if you are in love with her. . . .

I've tried to get out of here, to go see him, but they won't let me go. As the next-best thing I've written this, hoping that some one will go see Art in my stead.

Art is the big gray fellow on the right as you enter the elephant-house. He likes peanuts and gum-drops. But be careful not to let them catch you talking to him. If they do, they will arrest you and send you to this place.



Guiana

Illustrated by
George Avison

THE tarnished nickel watch on Cliff Jordan's lean bronzed wrist said eleven-fifty, and his throaty grunt was like a curse as he stood up.

"Maybe I'd better go looking for him."

"Maybe you had." Orcutt did not change his position in the wicker rocker by the window, but his small blue-green eyes snapped their impatience. His voice, both flat and brittle as he continued, had an accent as definitely American as the *New York* after his signature on the hotel register.

"I'm getting fed up with this run-around. For a placer claim in British Guiana that never produced more than a few hundred dollars in gold, we offer you twenty-five thousand."

"Well—" Jordan began to pace the room. "I'm ready to sell—to do business. You said Bannan'd be here at eleven."

"That is what he said." Esteban Cardoso, the Brazilian from Para, smiled and flipped his hands in a shrug.

Orcutt swung his chair around. "We want the claim; we're ready to pay. For two weeks, now, we've been chasing you around. We come down from New York, find out the claim is on the level, that there's some real gold coming out of that territory. You and Bannan told us you'd be here in Antados Sunday—yesterday, to sell your shares. You said we could get the other third from Gage when he got in next week. Or was that a gag too? You wrote him, didn't you?"

"Certainly I wrote him," snapped Jordan, coming to a stop in front of the window. "Air-mail. I told him what you'd give. He ought to be in on the *Black Eagle* next Monday."

"If you'd been here yesterday as you said—" Cardoso began in his polite clipped speech.

"I told you why," Jordan said irritably. "I had to heave to off Bequia, and then the Trades quit on me for twelve hours. But if Bannan's been here since Saturday noon—"

"He has." Orcutt stood up, a trim-figured man with a lean face and a chiseled jaw: a wiry, aggressive-looking fellow in his middle thirties, his linen suit immaculately laundered. "And burning up because you were late!"

Jordan turned away, stared out across the hotel grounds, where yellow slabs of light from the windows of the adjoining wing picked out a stone bird-bath on the lawn, the trunk of a cabbage palm, part of the tennis-court. Somewhere in the distance, a phonograph reproduced a year-old dance-tune in rasping metallic tones; against this, a battery of whistling frogs fought in a strident chorus.

Whistling frogs! But not to Jordan. Peepers, they called them back on Cape Cod. The thought brought a pressure of nostalgia and he turned back to the room, his scowl deepening.

"I should've sailed tonight," he said grimly. "Wanted to shove off after we finished here. I can hang on till morning; no longer."

"Find him, then," Cardoso said, getting up from the bed. "We'll wait. No matter what time; you bring him here."

For a moment Jordan studied the swart, handsome face of the Cardoso; noted the white drill suit with its red-figured silk handkerchief in the breast pocket, the ruby which winked from a middle finger. Then Jordan said, "Okay. I'll bring him," and he said it significantly, sliding a sidewise glance at Orcutt as he strode to the door.

OUTSIDE, the lush fragrance of the tropical night, the overhead blanket of a million stars that tried valiantly to take the place of a moon that had waned, were lost on Jordan. All he knew was that the breeze had died, as it always did at sundown; that he was hot

Gold

The old Spanish Main still has its buccaneers, though nowadays they use different weapons—as witness this thrill-crammed novelette by a writer new to these pages.

By GEORGE HARMON COXE

and sweaty with the brisk mile walk back to town, and the unaccustomed weight of his blue serge suit; that now, as always, Bannan meant trouble.

The feud, and it was a feud now, had started within a week of the time the odd trio of partners—Gage, the hotel steward; Bannan, the ruthless, blustering sailor from Port of Spain; Jordan, an ex-farmer from Cape Cod—had left Georgetown. It had flourished in the hot insect-infested jungle, and had nearly terminated, fatally, near the banks of the Essequibo.

Gage, who tried to hold himself aloof, was involved; but it was essentially a feud of two, born of distrust and hate out of an eight-weeks' struggle to handpan gold from a roaring jungle stream. In the year since the attempt had been abandoned, the quarrel had flared anew with each meeting. Now—

Jordan's thoughts momentarily checked as he turned right on Bay Street away from the black-lacquered surface of the inner harbor, and felt his way along the cobblestone floor of a narrow alley. The thoroughly British police-rule in Antados was strict. The pubs were closed. But there was one place Jordan knew.

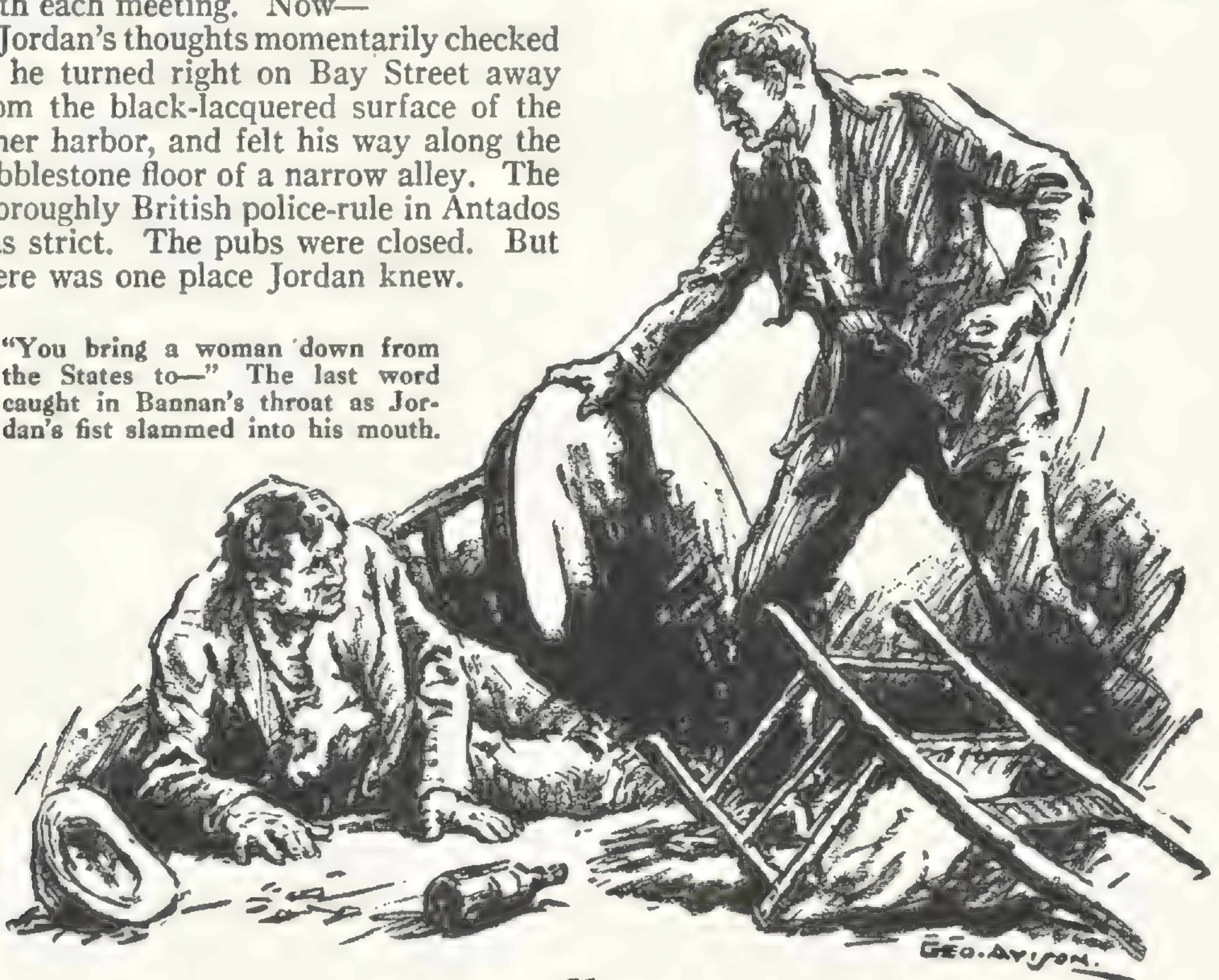
"You bring a woman down from the States to—" The last word caught in Bannan's throat as Jordan's fist slammed into his mouth.

There was no relief to the darkness now; no shadows, no light. The motley two-story buildings of coral stone had no beginning, no end. Only the overhanging galleries outlined against the sky had size or shape. He found the door he sought because he had been there often before. He knocked three times at the thick hardwood panel before there was an answer. Something moved beyond a six-inch circular opening cut head-high in the gate.

Jordan said: "Hello, Lee."

Lee apparently had good eyes for night work. He said, "All right," and opened the door.

There was a stone walk here, leading to a building beyond; and from this came a flash of light that sliced through the gate and into the street. This brief flash of light made shadows: Two, be-



neath an overhanging veranda diagonally across the alley; shadows that were unmoving yet strangely human.

Jordan followed the man called Lee across the court-like walk, through a narrow doorway to a long, low-ceilinged room where two feeble electric bulbs gave off a tepid dismal glow, and cast thick shadows along walls and corners.

LEE latched the door, waddled behind the short bar. He was a barrel-bodied black with a mustache and thick eyebrows that were streaked with gray. He said: "What do you want?"

Jordan said; "Rum and bitters," and started across the room.

At the far end was a hooded English-size billiard table. In front of this, and strung along the side walls, were a half dozen round tables, two of which were occupied. At one, three blacks slouched lazily and watched him with indolent hostile eyes. Jordan gave them but a glance, and continued to a table on the opposite side of the room.

Here a man sat alone, a big man who apparently had not shaved for days. His eyes had been on Jordan from the moment he entered the room; they followed his progress now from under thick brows, watched alertly as Jordan pulled out a chair and sat down without speaking.

Lee came along with the drink, and Jordan gave the fellow a shilling, said, "Never mind the change," and tossed off the mixture.

Walt Bannan spoke as Jordan put down the empty glass.

"What the hell do you want, Rube—trouble?"

Jordan put his elbows on the table. "You were supposed to meet me and Orcutt and Cardosa at eleven o'clock."

"All right," Bannan said, "I was supposed to meet you."

"They're waiting for you now."

"Let 'em wait."

"You mean, you're not—"

"I mean just that."

Bannan leaned forward as Jordan had, his elbows on the table. He did it deliberately, with a gesture that was somehow insulting. And like that, their faces a foot apart, the two men locked gazes.

That they had but little in common was at once apparent. Jordan was blond, rather tall, thin with a thinness that suggested the wiry toughness of a panther. His eyes, hard and glaring now,

were blue and set deep in a network of premature wrinkles brought on by squinting into the constant glare of sun on water. In spite of the incongruous blue suit, the five-year-old felt with its wide outmoded brim, there was a clean competence, a homely ruggedness about him that spoke of a background of good sound stock.

Bannan was as tall as Jordan, fifty pounds heavier. A white man, yet not quite that. His skin was a shade too dark, his nose a bit too flat, his small black eyes had, somehow, an upward slant at the edges, paralleling the brows. But he passed for a white man because he moved in countries where people did not ask questions about such things.

The upward-slanting eyes dropped first. Bannan pushed back a smudged pith helmet, took one arm from the table to reach in the pocket of his soiled jacket for a cigarette.

Jordan, watching him narrowly, said: "I've got my plans made, Bannan. I shove off tomorrow morning, and I clear this up before I go."

Bannan inhaled, blew smoke in Jordan's face, said: "You hate my guts, don't you?"

"Yeah," Jordan said simply.

"So we're even." Bannan's lips curved, and his lids came down to veil his eyes. "And I aint sellin' out tonight, Rube. Neither are you."

WITH an effort Jordan kept his temper. His face remained expressionless because the dim light could not show up the give-away look in his eyes. He spoke slowly, deliberately:

"Listen, Bannan. You came here to sell out."

"I changed my plans," Bannan said, grinning and rubbing the dirty stubble on his chin with a thick thumb.

"I've still got mine," Jordan went on. "I've waited a long time for this, and—"

"Sure," Bannan sneered. "I know, Rube. You want to get back to the farm, huh? I know all about it. You've got a cargo for Trinidad, and when you get there, you're gonna sell that sponge-bottomed sloop of yours and clear out."

"Orcutt and Cardosa are waiting," Jordan said, trying to choke back his mounting anger, to speak reasonably. "We're goin' back to the hotel."

"Gonna sell out," Bannan said, and the brown-paper cigarette between his lips twitched as he spoke. "And you've gotta do it now, because your girl came

down from the States. She got in yesterday, huh? And she's goin' on to Trinidad tomorrow, and you're gonna meet her there. What you get for the claim would've made a nice little wedding-present, huh?"

The anger streaked through Jordan's brain then, and his hands went white-knuckled on the table.

"The women down here aint good enough, are they, Rube?" Bannan went on quickly, his voice scornful, mocking. "You can't make the white women here, and you won't take the blacks. So you bring one down from the States to—"

Bannan finished the sentence, all except the last word. That one caught in his throat as Jordan's bony fist slammed into his mouth.

Bannan went over backward in the chair, and Jordan, on his feet as he swung, followed him and tried to strike again. The table rolled from under him. He fell on the big man, rammed home a savage left. Then Bannan's knee came up, caught him in the groin.

The force of the blow threw Jordan to one side. Quick pain and nausea gripped him, and before he could get to his feet, Bannan was on him. A fist smashed his cheekbone, staggered him; another caught him over the eye as he tried to clinch. . . . Then iron-fingered hands gripped him, pulled him back.

For a man of his bulk, Lee had moved with surprising quickness. Recruiting the three men at the other table, he had butted his way between the fighters, and an instant later was hustling them toward the door.

"No," he kept saying, shaking his head. "No. That don't go. I let you in for a drink, and you—"

"Aw—" Bannan growled, spitting blood and feeling of his teeth. "You saw him start it, didn't you?"

"Outside," Lee said. "Outside you can do what you want." He opened the door, and with his helpers escorted Bannan and Jordan to the outer gate, pushed them into the street.

Jordan threw off the hands that pinioned his arms, spun toward Bannan and took a step forward.

That one step was all he managed, because in the next moment something pricked him in the small of the back. Instinct flashed a warning, and he froze there, his eyes unconsciously focused on the spot where the vague shadows had been when he entered the place. They were gone now, and Bannan said:



Bannan's eyelids came down to veil his eyes.
"I aint sellin' out tonight."

"I thought you might come, Rube. Better not fool with that cutlass."

Jordan said, "I won't." And his anger cooled to a smoldering rage.

CHAPTER II

PRISON HOLD

THEY moved down the alley, Jordan in the lead and Bannan at his side and slightly behind. Who it was that held the cutlass against his back, Jordan did not know; nor did he bother to look around. Five years in the tropics had shown him that unless you knew a negro well, it was hard to distinguish one from the other. A wharf-rat, maybe; perhaps one of Bannan's crew. It did not matter.

And the cutlass—he knew better than to argue with that. In the hands of a native, who used this knife for everything from cutting wood and splitting coconuts to cleaning fish, such a weapon was as dangerous as a gun. More so now, because it was silent.

At Bay Street they turned, and began to pass the long row of motley sloops and schooners tied up at the wall. On none did there seem to be a sign of life. Jordan hesitated slightly as he passed his sloop, glanced hopefully for Oliver, the black he had left on watch. The point gouged his back and Bannan said:

"Keep moving. It aint far now."

Jordan proceeded to Bannan's black-hulled schooner; there the bigger man took his arm, pulled him to a stop.

"Wait," he said; he climbed aboard and disappeared down the companion-way abaft the wheel. When he came back a minute later, he carried a length of rope. The cutlass in Jordan's back forced him aboard. As he stood there on deck, Bannan tied his wrists behind his back.

Bannan said: "Good!" Then, as the cutlass was withdrawn, there was a rattle of silver in a pocket, the clink of coins as though dropped one by one into an open palm.

In that time Jordan gazed hard-eyed out across the jetty to the harbor. Riding there at anchor a third of a mile out, the promenade-deck lights of the *Oricabor*, which had arrived from Boston the evening before, with Jane Allen aboard, winked and were reflected from the glass-like surface of the water. To the right a squat, stackless motor-ship escaped a black-out by the grace of her riding-lights.

The *Oricabor*! Jordan's brain stuck on the significance of the word. It had brought his first personal contact with home in five years. It meant escape, literally. . . .

"Come on, Rube." Bannan's voice broke in on his thoughts, and he let himself be led aft and down into a tiny cabin. Here he sat down on the single bunk, and Bannan rummaged in a locker for a bottle and a single glass.

"So you were gonna sell out tonight?" Bannan poured rum into the glass. "And so was I." He gulped half his drink, rubbed his lips with the back of a hairy hand.

Jordan watched the fellow, and was conscious of a slowly rising hate. Bannan went on talking, drinking—he was half drunk now; but Jordan did not hear him just then. He was trying to find an answer for the vortex of questions in his brain.

WHAT was the idea of this hold-up? Why had Bannan about-faced so quickly on his plan to sell out? Not from spite. He would do that, Bannan would—do it to Jordan for the joy of seeing him squirm. But not if such an act meant personal loss.

Twenty-five thousand dollars—to be split three ways. And the tentative offer had come a few days after Jordan got that letter from Jane Allen saying she was coming to Trinidad. Once before she had so written. But that time, Jordan was just back from the bush with a

broken ankle. The sloop was on the beach, her dried-out seams needing calking and paint. And he had told the girl to wait. This time it was different; this time they could go back—

Bannan's open hand caught Jordan on the side of the head, knocked him against the bulkhead. His lips got stiff, and his face went white as he struggled to slip off the bunk. He heard Bannan curse as he regained his feet. Then a dirty canvas shoe was driven against his chest, knocking him back.

"Answer me, damn you!" barked Bannan, and his black eyes were bright and glaring. "I asked you, do you want to sell?"

Jordan's stiff lips pulled back in a weird smile, as he again straightened up. He said: "Yes, damn you, yes!"

"All right." Bannan seemed to relax. He leaned back against the folding table, continued thickly: "Your share of that twenty-five thousand is about eight thousand three hundred and thirty-three dollars. I'll give you that much, because it's the easiest way."

JORDAN'S eyes went wide, then narrowed skeptically. He sought but could not find an answer that would fit.

"What," he asked finally, "do you figure to use for money?"

"I'll give you fifty to bind the bargain," said Bannan, and his little eyes were bright with greed. "Draw up a contract now. You can have the rest in thirty days." He fumbled in his pocket for a pencil, stopped in his fumbling to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

"Thirty days," he muttered. "Give you and the woman a longer honeymoon."

Jordan's face flushed to the roots of his sun-bleached blond hair. "Never mind."

"Never mind?" Bannan scowled. "Never mind what?"

"I changed my mind," Jordan said. "Like you."

"You said you wanted to sell."

"Yeah. But not to you, not like this." Jordan smiled again, grimly, but not without a certain sardonic humor. "Because I know you, Bannan."

"You stole gold-dust on Gage and me; you double-crossed us from the start; you left me on the Essequibo with a busted ankle because you thought I wouldn't get out alive, and—"

"I should've finished you," Bannan grated. "And it aint too late yet."

He moved around to lean close to Jordan. "I'm makin' you an offer because it's easier; see. But I can do it the hard way if I have to. You know how the contract reads—if one of us dies, the other two rate his share."

"And it's not the first time you've thought about it," Jordan said. "Only it would be tough, on this island."

"It wouldn't be so tough a few miles offshore." Bannan cocked one eyebrow. "Just a little riskier. That's why I'm makin' you the offer. You were so damn' anxious to—"

"No," Jordan said, and his eyes were cold, suspicious. "Not even for cash. Not to a double-crossing crook. And there's something smelly about this. I've waited this long; I'll wait till I find out what it is."

Bannan took one threatening step forward, his swart face twisted with rage, his eyes blazing. For an instant Jordan stiffened for the expected assault. Then, unexpectedly, Bannan stopped, cursed once as his fingers stretched and contracted.

"All right," he flung out. "We do it the hard way then."

He jerked Jordan to his feet, cursed continually as he thrust him up the companionway and forward along the deck. Jordan made no attempt at escape. He knew where he was going, but he also knew a struggle would be futile with his hands tied behind his back.

Bannan slid back a hatch, swung Jordan to the opening, then kicked him into the void before he could recover his balance.

To avoid a bad fall, Jordan jumped. He struck on his feet, went to his knees with momentum slamming him forward on one shoulder. As he rolled over, Bannan's voice thundered down from above.

"Laugh yourself out of there, you —!"

The hatch rasped above him. There was clinking thud of a metal bar, the faint sound of retreating footsteps, then silence.

AT once Jordan began his exploration of the hold. He knew that even with his hands free, he stood little chance of escape; yet he preferred action, any kind of action, to the constant goading of his thoughts.

He began to feel his way around the sloping timbers. The hold was nearly empty, except a barrel or two and some boxes. Jordan knew, because he fell

over some of them; and after that, he moved warily, inching his way along the after bulkhead, until he felt something sharp prick the back of his thigh, and tear at his trousers.

Blowing out his breath in a quick, hopeful blast, he explored the object with his fingers, found it a half-inch tip of a spike. He went to his knees then, back to the bulkhead, and began the awkward business of trying to pick the knots on his wrists.

He worked until his cramped muscles refused him, then sat down for a minute to rest. And with inaction, his thoughts strayed back to the forming of that crazy partnership.

HE had met Gage in Georgetown while waiting for a cargo. It had been Gage who, fired by accounts of gold taken from jungle rivers, had got the tip, the general location, from a Chinaman who had been in the back-country with a scientific expedition.

Jordan, sailing in and out of Georgetown for three years, working for a stake which continued to elude him, was ready to try anything. And Bannan had been included in the triumvirate because he had some ready cash. Even then Jordan knew the man's ruthless reputation, knew of the rumors which linked him with murders in Manáos, in Paramaribo. But the reputation of no single man could keep him from having this fling at riches.

The claim they staked was good. The trouble lay with themselves: two seamen and a hotel steward, all three lacking proper experience. Gage came down with fever the sixth week, finally made his way out with four natives to help him. Bannan and Jordan stuck it out another week, and it was during this time that Jordan found out Bannan had been filching gold-dust from the common pot, designed to be split three ways.

They were at each other's throats from that time on. They hoarded their food, fought over it—and panned gold. Twenty, forty, fifty dollars' worth at a time. But they had to quit. They were too far from supplies, could not live on the country. And they came out together until Jordan broke his ankle and Bannan went on alone.

For once Jordan's luck was in. A party of natives found him crawling along a few hours later, carried him to a village where the government launch picked him up on the next weekly trip.

Bannan had gone when he reached Georgetown, and during the month in the hospital Jordan and Gage talked it over.

The claim was good. They had averaged fifteen dollars a day each. But they needed capital—for a gang of men, for hydraulic pumps and gas engines and supplies. There was no capital to be had. Jordan went back to the sea.

The jump in the price of gold brought quick new hope, and three months previously, a syndicate had gone up the river and set to work with modern methods and equipment. The results electrified the district—sent Gage to New York, with a temporary job as a steward on a northbound steamer, to look for capital. And while he was there, Orcutt and Cardosa found Jordan in Georgetown, went up-country to investigate. Now they were ready to buy, and—

JORDAN cursed and got to his knees again. A smoldering bitterness kept pace with his thoughts, and he forgot the choking stuffiness of the hold, the sweat-sodden clothing, the laceration on his wrists where the spike-point had nicked him. The awkwardness of his work continued, but the steady persistence of effort brought results. He picked the first knot; in another fifteen minutes he was free.

He sat up then, gently massaged his chafed wrists, struck a match. The brief yellow glow gave him the picture of the interior which he continued to visualize when the flame died out. He rolled a barrel under the hatch, hoisted a box on top of it and climbed up.

The hatch was immovable; he got down then, stood shaking from his exertion, fighting to get his breath. For the first time trouble and dejection were heavy upon him, and after a bit he lit a cigarette, began to pace the rough floor. He pulled a box against the ship's wall, sat down and leaned back.

Sometime later he heard footsteps overhead—more than one set, he thought. There was no sequence to them; they moved peculiarly, and he climbed back upon the barrel and box and yelled:

"Open up—open up there!"

He tugged at the hatch. It was still tightly fastened.

Back on his seat again he dozed off, and when he awoke the luminous dial of his watch pointed to 4:50. A certain feeling of guilt prodded him to action now, a feeling that seemed to shame him for

going to sleep, for quitting. Glaring sightlessly in the general direction of the hatch, he felt his way to his platform and climbed up. He was totally unprepared for what happened.

That cover moved with the first tug, and surprise robbed him of a moment or two as he widened the opening and stuck his head out into the night air. Then with a savage grunt of satisfaction he hoisted himself on deck.

For a full minute he stood there, staring out across the roadstead at the shimmering lights of a new arrival which rode at anchor to the left of the *Oricabor*, and tried to reason an explanation for his release.

At once aware that he did not particularly care who had slipped back that hatch bolt, nor for what reason, he started aft with a bitterness of frustration gripping his brain, centering on just one thing: a chance to get at Bannan.

Orcutt and Cardosa would have bought two-thirds of the mine claim, would have taken a chance with Gage when he arrived. They were not, however, interested in one third—Jordan's third. And Bannan—

Jordan swung down the narrow companionway and burst into Bannan's tiny cabin. It was empty, disorderly—but the bunk had not been used.

The discovery was like an anticlimax, and braced there in the doorway, Jordan's anger dissipated in sudden discouragement. . . . He turned and slowly went on deck.

CHAPTER III

MURDER

THE horizon to the east was dark gray when Jordan came aboard his sloop. There was an awning stretched over the little poop; and here, in Jordan's canvas chair, a negro dressed in khaki shirt, and pants rolled to the knee, was stretched in sleep.

Jordan, tormented by the thought that this man might have seen him being marched to Bannan's schooner, stared wrathfully down at the black for a moment. Then, moving behind the chair, he snapped, "Oliver!" and swung his foot against that part of the chair which bulged and hung lowest.

The black lifted six inches, dropped back. His eyes opened wide immediately, and he said, "Yahsuh, yahsuh," and scrambled to his feet.



"I should've finished you," Bannan grated. "And it aint too late yet. . . . You know how the contract reads—if one of us dies, the other two rate his share."

"How long you been asleep?" Jordan rapped.

"Couldn't be long, sir; couldn't be long. Jest dozin' I was, sir."

"Get below!" Jordan yelled. "You're lyin'—and you know it. Get below. I want some coffee. Hot, you understand? And get Antone up here."

He stood there by the rail watching the darkness fade until Antone, his mate, came on deck and stood waiting, a burly thick-chested black with a shirt open down to his muscle-ribbed belly. Jordan heard the man at his side, but he did not turn until he could speak calmly.

"We'll shove off in an hour. Let 'em eat now."

Jordan went to his tiny cubby-hole of a cabin. He took shorts, drill trousers, a khaki shirt and canvas sneakers from a locker. His duffle-bag seemed strangely disordered as he took out a half-filled bottle of rum, but he gave it little thought. When he came back on deck, Antone was waiting.

Jordan stripped at once, motioned to the black who had picked up a battered bucket with a ten-foot rope bent to the handle. Over the side went the bucket. Antone yanked it back, threw the pailful

hard against Jordan's lean, spread-legged figure. Eight times the black repeated the dose, and in that time Jordan stood there gazing out to sea, as motionless as a statue, his profile a grim, bronze etching. Then he said:

"Okay."

The black padded away. Jordan pulled up another pailful, bathed his face, gingerly touching the bruised cheekbone, the gash in one eyebrow. He opened the bottle of rum and patted liquid against his face and brow. Then he emptied the pockets of the blue serge, now a crumpled network of wrinkles, white-smudged with arrow-root, gummed at one elbow with tar.

The rope which had bound his hands he had thrust into his coat pocket. Now he glared angrily at it, threw it over the side with a curse and dressed in his clean clothing. When Oliver arrived with a steaming cup of coffee, Jordan dumped half the contents, filled it up with rum.

They were under way in less than an hour, and were a good two miles off shore when Antone made the discovery.

Jordan was at the wheel—because he wanted something to do. And even then he could not control his thoughts. Five

years of this sort of thing—and he was a farmer! Ironical, that. Bannan called him Rube because he thought it irritated him; but the term was irritating only in what it recalled.

He was a farmer, all right. Not a share-cropper or a dirt farmer, but a salt-water farmer, really. His father's fifty acres had a quarter-mile of water frontage, and Jordan had known sail-boats since he could walk, had owned this sloop before his father died.

At that time the blow had been doubly bitter, because he had not known there had been any stock-market speculation. The farm which, from corn, strawberries, lettuce and cranberries, had always been a paying proposition, was hopelessly burdened.

It finally went to the bank, because there was no cash—nothing but the sloop. And a forced sale would have brought no more than five hundred. So Jordan turned to it as a livelihood because it was the only other thing he knew.

He tried fishing, found that only the Diesel-powered trawlers made money. And in those waters sail was not much used for cargo. So he had come south with one paid hand, and learned that the farther south he went the cheaper he could hire men. From Georgetown north to Guadeloupe, he sailed in the island trade, always making a living, always searching for the ten-strike that would release him.

Five thousand would regain him the farm; another thousand would rehabilitate the house, the land. Jane Allen had told him this in one of her recent letters—and now she had come to meet him.

Her uncle lived in Port of Spain, and they were to be married there. Well, this time he'd go through with it. That claim was still good, and if Bannan had been willing to buy him out—

HE became acutely conscious of Antone, standing silently a few feet to one side; Jordan felt the fellow's stare and was irritated by it. He turned, scowling; and the scowl deepened as he saw that covert look and could not fathom it.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" he growled.

Antone's white-rimmed eyes never wavered. He spoke slowly, with unusual softness of tone.

"It will be all right, sir. We will take care of it." He backed up a step under

Jordan's hard suspicious gaze. "No need to worry."

"Worry?" said Jordan. "About what? Speak up, damn it! Don't stand there—"

He broke off as Antone's eyes flicked sideways to the fore-castle head. Jordan's gaze followed, and he saw Oliver and George and Buck gathered there around a spare jib that needed repair. There was something ominous yet furtive about their motionless stance and downcast eyes.

Jordan said: "What is this, anyway?" Then, moving from behind the wheel, he ordered sharply, "Take her," and started forward.

WALT BANNAN lay there, flat on his back. He was dressed as Jordan had last seen him, except for the pith helmet and drill jacket. But his face was pale now, waxen with death. There was an unfamiliar stiffness about the set of the body; and the shirt-front, the waist-band of the trousers, was one large red stain.

For a long moment Jordan stood staring, as morbidly fascinated as the blacks. Then reason came to his rescue, and he snapped at Oliver:

"Back to your work. All of you!"

George said, "I was fixin' the jib," and held his ground until Jordan turned on him. Something in the narrowed blue eyes moved him as the words had failed to do. He backed away, turned and went aft with the other two.

Jordan went to one knee, his eyes searching each detail of the body until they touched the right hand. Here his gaze held steady. The hand was clenched into a rigid fist, and from the top of this there was a thin line of paper.

The full realization of his position opened before his mind's eyes more quickly than that clenched fist. There was no logic in his thoughts now, but the facts were clear. The police would hold him, would have to hold him. That fight last night, the perpetual feud, the body here on his sloop—

He stuck there on that thought an instant as he pried at the set fingers. He could dump the body overboard, weight it down. There would be no remorse in such an act; he felt no sorrow, no regret that Bannan was dead, but he was at once angry at the thought. To hell with that! He hadn't killed Bannan—and it was important to him that everyone know it. There'd be a row about the disappearance and—

He turned, bawled: "We're goin' back. Bring her about."

Antone came on a dead run. "Go back?" he wheezed. "You—the police will—"

"Yeah," rapped Jordan. "The police." He hesitated, his eyes narrowing. "You think I killed him, huh?"

Antone's black brow cracked in a frown. His chest swelled with a deep breath and he said: "You can trust me, sir."

"I know I can," Jordan said. "But I wouldn't bet on the rest of these hands. And even if I could,"—he stood up, faced the black,—“I wouldn't dump him. Because I didn't kill him, see? Now get back to your job."

He watched the negro's broad back move aft; then he went to his knees again, renewed his effort at the clenched fist. It was a long time before he could release the thumb and first two fingers. Then he saw that the paper was but a scrap torn from some larger sheet. When it was completely free, he smoothed it out.

The type told him it was part of a cablegram, the lower right-hand corner. And there were three words and a signature which read:

. MEET YOU TUESDAY
GAGE

Jordan sucked in his breath.

"Gage!" he said aloud.

The question of who had killed Bannan had been in the back of his head from the moment he saw the body. He had thought of Orcutt and Cardoso, dismissed that angle as both improbable and without motive. Bannan had enemies in every port. Any one of these could have killed without much compunction; or it might have been some one from out of the man's past. But why hide the body aboard Jordan's sloop?

Now he had the answer. The ugly thought reared up in his brain, and he put that thought into words.

"Gage—they double-crossed me!"

It was this cable which changed Bannan's mind, must have been the cable. And there was some deal on between them. Gage was not expected until next week; but—the cable said: "Meet me Tuesday."

Jordan cursed then as he remembered the ship which had come in during the night—the *Stehndam*, which had come into her berth sometime while Jordan was held prisoner in that hold.

"It's got to be that way," he said, again speaking aloud. "And Gage got ashore somehow. They must've had an argument, and—"

A hand on his shoulder checked him, and he looked up to see Antone. There was resignation in the man's carriage, in his voice.

"The Customs launch, sir," he said slowly. "She's meeting us."

Jordan stood up, and his eyes focused on the peculiar round straw hats of the black sailors in the Customs service, a chilled pressure ran along his spine. He had hoped, impulsively at the time, to put back and hold up his gruesome find while he had time to look around, perhaps to find Gage. Now he turned and went aft to the wheel.

The sloop, her nose into the breeze and the leech of her mainsail slapping out a taut hollow beat, was drifting easily when the launch came alongside.

Tyson, the harbor-master, standing on the little foredeck, said: "Ahoy there, Jordan."

Jordan stepped to the rail.

"Why are you putting back?" Tyson called.

Jordan hesitated while his lips fashioned a stiff smile. "To bring in a dead man," he said bitterly.

"Bannan?"

So they were looking for him! Might have learned of the fight. A break he'd turned back, maybe.

He said: "Yeah—Bannan."

"Stand by," Tyson said. "I'm coming aboard."

CHAPTER IV

ESCAPE

THE investigation was held right there on the waterfront, in a long, high-ceilinged room on the second floor of the harbor police building.

Tyson had left, turned the affair over to the island police, and his place was taken by Deputy-Inspector Noyes-Tracey, a stiffly erect man of forty or so, resplendent in khaki uniform, Sam Browne belt and polished boots. At the moment he stood in the center of the room, his hands clasped behind him, listening to the coroner's report.

"He's been dead several hours." The doctor, a small man with a Vandyke and a white suit inches too short for him, began packing his bag. "I should say he was killed between three and four,

possibly four-thirty, this morning. The knife-blade was about five and a half inches—and it went straight in.”

“What d’you mean, straight in?” asked Noyes-Tracey.

“Why—” The doctor hesitated, blinked pale eyes, and snapped shut his bag. “Straight in, that’s all. The top edge, the flat edge, was parallel with the floor—if he was standing at the time he was killed.”

Jordan sat hunched over in a straight-backed chair, his elbows on his knees,

his head up, watching the Inspector. He had told, briefly, his own story, and it had not sounded particularly logical in the telling.

Noyes-Tracey was an Englishman. That much was evident from his speech and his manner. He was polite, deferential, even; there was nothing of the bully in his tactics. But he remained unconvinced.

Jordan glanced slowly about as the doctor left, studied briefly the other two occupants of the room: Sergeant-major Patrick, a gruff, gray-haired veteran with a walrus mustache and shaggy brows, who wore the conventional white uniform jacket and pith helmet; and Corporal Detective Robert, a tall, lean, tan-skinned negro in plain clothes. Patrick was a routine cop. Jordan sensed this from the minute he heard the man speak; but this fellow Robert, colored or not, acted as if he had something on the ball.

The Inspector’s throaty baritone broke in on his thoughts.

“So you think some one framed you, eh, Jordan?”

Jordan glanced at him, nodded.

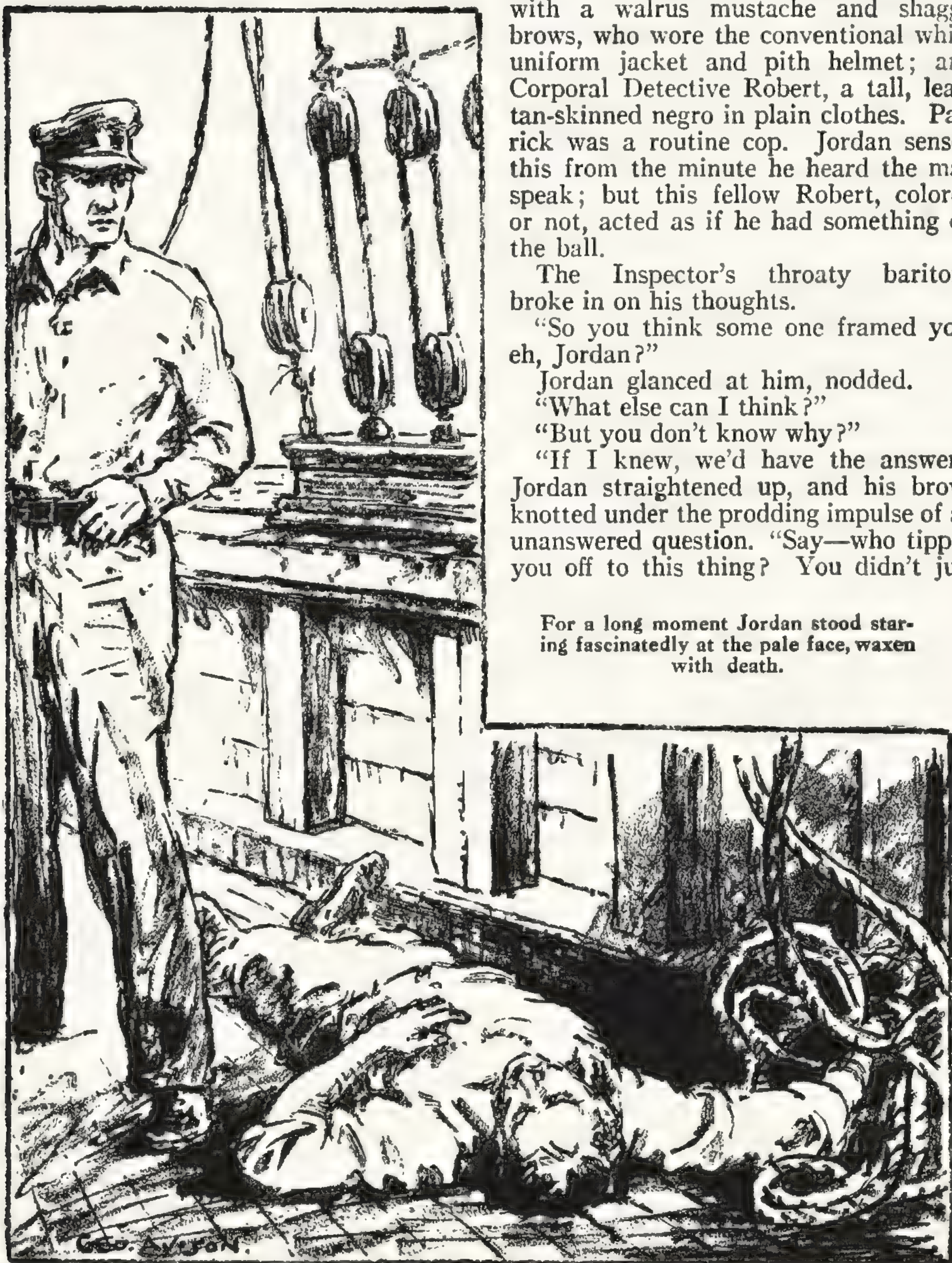
“What else can I think?”

“But you don’t know why?”

“If I knew, we’d have the answer.”

Jordan straightened up, and his brows knotted under the prodding impulse of an unanswered question. “Say—who tipped you off to this thing? You didn’t just

For a long moment Jordan stood staring fascinatedly at the pale face, waxen with death.



send the harbor police after me because—”

“Some negro came to the barracks early this morning and told the Sergeant”—he nodded at Patrick—“that Bannan was missing, that he had not been on his schooner all night. The Sergeant said he would look into the matter—we thought the fellow was one of Bannan’s crew.”

Noyes-Tracey coughed behind his hand. “But—er,” he went on, “it seems that we were wrong. He was unknown to any of the hands. However, in a few minutes another fellow came rushing over with a bloody knife in his hand. Said he had found it under the bunk when he went in to call Bannan. So, you see—”

“How did that add up to me?” growled Jordan. “You didn’t know anything about that fight last night then.”

“But there was blood in the cabin,” Noyes-Tracey said. “Detective Robert went along with the Sergeant. He found traces of blood on the stones alongside the boat. When he followed them up, they stopped where your sloop had been moored.”

“The fact that the first guy who tipped you off was fishy should’ve told you something was wrong.”

“Fishy?” The Inspector’s brows went up. “Oh, yes. Quite. We knew something was wrong then. That’s why—”

A knock on the door interrupted him. A native policeman came in with Jordan’s blue suit.

Robert moved toward the fellow, spoke for the first time, addressing the Inspector.

“I’d like to check up on this, sir.”

“Check up on it?” said Noyes-Tracey.

“Yes sir. I’d like to inspect the hold of the schooner, see what I can find. I’d like to have the suit identified by Mr. Orcutt and Mr. Tracey—and by Lee.”

“Ah—yes, by all means; a good idea,” the Inspector said, and Robert went out.

THERE was a moment of silence then, and Jordan tried to review the events that had taken place since he had been brought to this room.

Orcutt and Cardosa had been summoned, and had verified Jordan’s story as far as they could. While the harbor launch was out, the local bureau of criminal investigation had quickly checked Bannan’s movements, traced him as far as Lee’s place. Lee had been brought along to tell his story of the fight.

So far, Jordan had made no mention of the presence of Jane Allen at the Seaside Hotel, of the fact that he had had dinner with her the previous evening; neither had he spoken of the piece of message he had taken from Bannan’s closed fist.

Something stubborn and unexplainable had prompted him to withhold this clue. That Gage was the killer was a conviction which had grown steadily. He had hoped, not too logically, to get a chance to look Gage up, to confront him personally. The police moved easily here; they would be polite with Gage; they would dilly-dally around so that if he did have the balance of the cablegram, he could destroy it. Jordan knew his own methods would be more direct, if less ethical. If Gage had the message, he was the killer; and if he had it, Jordan could get that proof.

AGAIN the Inspector interrupted his thoughts. “You see, ah—Jordan—ah, the one ramification of this crime that makes it point so significantly toward you is the fact that you and Bannan were partners.

“You hated each other, you had a quarrel last night; by your own admission Bannan took you at sword’s-point to his boat and locked you up. All these things are motives. But the most damning motive of all is that with Bannan’s death you stood to become half owner in this gold claim.”

The truth of the statement was inescapable, and Jordan made up his mind immediately. He must find out for sure if Gage had come in on the *Stehndam*.

He said: “So did Gage.”

“Gage?” repeated Noyes-Tracey, “What about Gage?”

“He and I are partners now,” Jordan said bitterly. “Bannan’s dead. We each own half. A motive for Gage, too.”

“Yes. Rather.” The Inspector spread his hands, smiled tolerantly and glanced at Patrick. “But Gage is in the States, or on the *Black Eagle*.”

“Suppose,” rapped Jordan, leaning forward with narrowed eyes, “suppose Gage was here last night—this morning.”

“Well, in that case—”

“Why don’t you check up?” Jordan said, and his voice was sharp and brittle. “The *Stehndam* came in early. Why don’t you find out just when? You can get a passenger list, and maybe you can find out if anybody got off early—one way or another.”

It was mid-afternoon when Robert came back and launched into a story that was well told, and spoke of a thoroughly done job of investigation.

"The suit checks," he began. "It has been identified, and I took it to the laboratory and had them analyze the tar on the elbow, the arrowroot. Both tally with the specimens I took from the hold of the schooner."

He turned toward Jordan, and his white teeth flashed in a smile.

"I also found the spike-point you spoke of. But"—he hesitated and the smile faded—"there was no rope; no short pieces anywhere about."

"No," said Jordan bitterly, "there wasn't." And then he told how he had pocketed the length that bound him, how he had thrown it overboard. But with the telling, somehow the incident took on a manufactured air.

He was still trying to justify this act of his when Sergeant Patrick and another plain-clothes man came into the room.

"We have been making inquiries of the steamship people, sir," Patrick began. "There was a Mr. Gage aboard. Got on as a passenger at St. Lucia yesterday afternoon, he did."

Jordan jerked erect, and his face got taut and set. He said, "Hah," and that one word of ominous satisfaction was the only sound in the room.

The Inspector, clearly surprised and upset by the information, said, "Well!" with a sharp exhalation.

Jordan's eyes flicked to Robert. The colored detective corporal had a curiously enigmatic smile on his lean face.

NOYES-TRACEY said, "Well," again. But now his voice had a new undercurrent of crispness and authority. "Well, did you find him?"

"No sir," Patrick said gruffly and cleared his throat. "And he hasn't been seen today. When the cabin steward went in his room this morning, he found a note saying Gage would send for his baggage, and there was a three-bob tip. That's all we could find about Gage—don't know when he got off."

"The baggage," Noyes-Tracey said. "Where is it?"

"A boy came aboard with a note, and the steward turned it over to him and—"

"It had to go through the Customs, didn't it?"

"It did that, sir. But a man came for it, said he was Mr. Gage. There were only two small bags. And—well, the

Customs don't bother much with tourists—"

"A pity it is, too," snapped Noyes-Tracey. He hesitated, spoke again. "All right, Sergeant. Very good."

HE turned to Jordan. "We'll want a description of Mr. Gage. In detail, you understand." Jordan gave this description, and the Inspector said:

"He won't get off the island without help. It's been tried before. We'll get him, and between the two of you, we should have a satisfactory answer."

"Yeah," said Jordan sardonically. "And what about me now?"

"Yes—" The Inspector looked surprised. Then he spoke easily, and half apologetically.

"We'll have to hold you, of course. There'll be a coroner's inquest; you'd have to remain for that in any case. By that time we should have this thing cleared up. Meanwhile, we can't take a chance. We'll try to make you comfortable—you'll want to see your consul. You understand our position?"

"Sure," said Jordan dryly. "I understand. Back home we call it a pinch."

He went down the stairs, flanked by Patrick and Robert, and gave in to the bitterness of frustration that assailed him. In all the fragmentary ideas that streaked through his brain, only one gave him any satisfaction: Gage was in town. If he could get a chance to find him—

Patrick's gruff voice said: "How'd you know about Gage?"

"I didn't," Jordan lied. "I was just grabbin' at straws."

"One thing is certain," Robert said. "If you're telling the truth, somebody framed you to hold the bag, and Gage ought to be able—"

Jordan glanced at the negro with widened eyes. His voice sounded different, now that they were away from the Inspector; there was an awkward effort to handle American slang. He said:

"You talk like you'd been in the States."

"I have," Robert said, and grinned. "I had a six-months' leave, spent quite a bit of time with your police. I went through New York's Center Street station, and I spent two weeks in Boston at their headquarters on Berkly Street."

Robert, apparently pleased with Jordan's interest, talked continually as they crossed Trafalgar Square, passed the public buildings and the general post office and headed for Roebuck Street.

Jordan, immersed in his thoughts, heard little of what was said. All he knew was that he had been framed, that he could never leave Antados until he was cleared, that Gage was the man who could clear him—if he still had that missing section of the cablegram.

A deep-voiced bell clanged four o'clock, and all at once the street was crowded with homeward-bound workers, white, black and brown. And then the idea was there, full-blown in Jordan's brain: One minute he was cursing the circumstance which had trapped him; the next he was planning escape.

It was a wild idea, and he knew he could never escape for long, even if he wanted to; but right now he wanted time—free time—to play his own hand. He had nothing much to lose, and a few hours now might be worth days later. An onrushing bus gave him the chance to translate his thoughts into action.

It came tearing along, a red and yellow hybrid, horn honking, the ticket-taker clinging to the foot-rail along the near side. Jordan waited until it was a few feet away; then he spun quickly, stepped back between Patrick and Robert, made a flying leap for that running-board.

Patrick's shout was dim and far-away as Jordan's hands found two uprights and the force of the pull yanked him aboard. The driver, unaware of the attempt, seemed to concentrate on the horn. Finally the ticket-taker came to life. He pressed the signal buzzer, grabbed Jordan with his free hand.

The bus slowed down, and Jordan grunted, knocked the hand loose. As he swung to the pavement, he glanced over his shoulder. Patrick and Robert were running toward him, the Sergeant blowing shrill blasts on his whistle.

Jordan grunted in satisfaction. One thing, they didn't carry guns down here on routine duty. It was a big help. He cut through an alley on his left, turned right, raced across Victoria Bridge. A St. Lawrence bus overtook him here and he swung aboard.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD PARTNER

IF Jane Allen was conscious of Jordan's informal garb—sneakers, khaki shirt open at the throat—when he knocked at the door of her hotel room fifteen minutes later, she accepted it as natural.

She said, "Cliff!" as he entered, and lifting her head, kissed him.

Crossing the room to the window, Jordan was aware now that there was another reason why he had made his break. Gage, yes. But Jane had to be told, and he wanted to do it this way—here, where he could be alone, not in some dingy room of the jail or police barracks, with perhaps a half dozen dusky eyes watching, following the movements of the girl.

Jane Allen stepped toward him, said: "Something's happened, Cliff. Is—is it bad news about the claim?"

He studied her a moment before he answered. She had changed but little in the past five years; he had marveled at this the evening before when he first saw her. That dark wavy hair, the clear, direct look in the hazel eyes; the clean line of the chin and neck. These were the same. She was young, but not so young. Twenty-six, he thought. And he was glad of this because now, there was a poise, an understanding acceptance of things, that he could depend on.

He said, "Yes," and without hesitation told her what had happened.

SOME of the color had fled from the girl's cheeks as he spoke; her eyes widened, and her breathing, the rise and fall of her breast was quickened, more pronounced. Yet, when he finished, she managed a smile, and her voice held no trace of reproach as she said:

"You shouldn't have done it, Cliff. Run away, I mean."

"I know it."

"Even if they don't find you—"

"Sure." Jordan dropped into a chair by the window. "The cops are pretty efficient here. But I want to find Gage myself—and there's something else."

He hesitated for a moment, conscious of a slight tightening of his throat that he did not try to diagnose. He chose his words carefully as he continued.

"I've been away a long time: I've changed since I left home. I never was a smoothie, and therefore years haven't softened me up any. You were going to wait for me; and all this time you've probably been building me up as a glamorous sort of a guy who's—"

"If I have," she broke in, "it's because I had something a lot more durable and worth-while to start with. I would have come before, if you had let me."

Jordan interrupted.

"I only let you come this time," he said doggedly, "because I had faith in

that claim. But I'm in a spot now. I've got to stay until this thing is cleared up. You're going out of here tonight; you're going to stay with your uncle in Trinidad for a few days, the way you planned; then go home until—"

"Not this time," Jane Allen said, smiling. "You said you could sell the sloop, I have a little money. I can go back to the library if I have to. I'm going to stay this time until we can go back together."

Jordan started to argue, then checked himself, and a wry grin twisted his bronzed face. "If we go back," he said grimly, "you won't have to worry about the library. That claim must be better than I thought if it's worth murder." He stood up.

"Wait, Cliff." Jane Allen moved toward him, an anxious light in her eyes. "You can't get anywhere rushing out and—"

"I can try." Jordan's voice took on a thin metallic ring. "Somebody framed me. He murdered Bannan, dumped the body on my sloop, pulled the hatch-bolt so I could move on in the morning. Then he tipped off the cops so that—"

"You're sure it's Gage?" the girl asked.

"His cable was in Bannan's hand, wasn't it?" Jordan's lips tightened, flattened against his teeth. "Why should Gage cable Bannan? He knew he was a crook. Gage and I never had much trouble; if he was level in this, he'd wired me and—"

He broke off, and his eyes, bright and glaring, widened so that the girl said: "What? What is it, Cliff?"

"Nothing," Jordan said slowly. "I was just wondering if maybe he tried to wire me and—"

"You could call the cable office," Jane Allen said. "They could tell you if—"

Jordan was already halfway across the room. He said, "I'll be right back," went into the hall to the wall telephone.

HE got his number without trouble, and he said: "A cable came in for me a few days ago. I lost it. Will you read it to me again? Jordan's the name, C. H. Jordan."

He waited there in the half-light of the narrow hallway, tense, dry-throated, and the sweat came out on his forehead. Then the voice said:

"Yes." A pause. "It's signed 'Gage.' It reads: '*Offered hundred thousand and ten per cent must have all three shares stop wire at once Hotel Stenson!*'"

"When was it received?" demanded Jordan.

"Saturday morning, eight A. M. Delivered at eight-forty."

JANE ALLEN was standing in the center of the room when Jordan went back. A certain tense breathlessness was in her voice as she said: "Was there—something?"

Jordan said, "Yes," and repeated the message in a taut, thin voice.

The girl's forehead puckered in a frown. "It was delivered," she repeated slowly. "Then it was intercepted. Some one posed as you. Bannan—"

She stopped then, seemed to study the mirthless smile on Jordan's lips, followed him with her anxious gaze as he crossed to the chair by the window. He lit a cigarette before he spoke, and the smile, still mirthless, seemed forced and set.

"Not Bannan," he said. "Bannan's schooner did not get in till Saturday noon. Not Gage." He stood up suddenly and Jane Allen said:

"What are you going to do?"

"I think I'll look up Orcutt and Cardoso," Jordan said, and flipped the cigarette through the half-opened window.

"It's a job for the police," the girl said quickly, her voice rising. "If you had given them that piece from Gage, they might have got the original and found out—"

"Yeah," Jordan said absently. "You're right."

"Then go to them now."

"Later," Jordan grated.

"But—"

"No. You don't understand. We've got the motive. Orcutt and Cardoso wanted that claim for \$25,000. They knew I was sailing this morning. Somehow they got wise to Bannan. But there's no proof to hang on them—nothing but those two cables.

"And the cops are different here. They won't arrest those two killers. They'll take them down for questioning, maybe. They'll be polite and take their time, and Orcutt and Cardoso won't need much to get rid of anything dangerous. And I'll be in jail waiting. No. I've plugged along for five years; I've got to handle this thing as I see it—in my own way. You've had confidence in me this long, you've got to—"

"All right," Jane Allen said, and after a moment she achieved a smile. "But don't go out now. Let me look down in the lobby, in front of the hotel."

She went out, and confidence and assurance came to Jordan in her absence. He did not worry about Orcutt and Cardoso now. And the girl. She was always like that: dependable, loyal, even when she thought you were wrong.

"There's a policeman out front," she said when she came back. Then, hesitating, evading his eyes: "Give me a little break too, Cliff. Wait till it's dark before you try to leave."

AT eight-fifteen Jordan made his way across the darkened grounds of the Hotel Regal, skirting widely the lighted windows of the main wing. The new moon was up now, and the majestic top of the cabbage palm stood silhouetted against the clear blue of the sky above the hotel roof. The beating chorus of the whistling frogs seemed to pace his long, silent strides.

He went through a window at the end of the first-floor corridor on the right wing, climbed the stairs to the second floor. With no definite plan of action, with no particular desire for one, he knocked on the door of Room 60.

The knock stirred up footsteps immediately. Orcutt's crisp voice said: "Yeah?"

Jordan said: "A boy, sir," thickly. "A telephone call, sir."

The door opened then, and Jordan pushed in, saw that Orcutt's hand made a suspicious bulge in his pocket, that he was too far away to be seized. The fellow backed quickly away, his small eyes widening, then narrowing. Jordan shut the door and leaned back against it.

Cardosa, sitting in a wicker rocker, his feet on the bed, jumped up as Jordan entered, stood there now, his swart, handsome face scowling darkly, surprise and amazement written in his beady eyes.

Orcutt said: "You must be nuts."

"Maybe I am," grunted Jordan, and let his glance slide around the room.

The furniture was white, the bed modern. A door opened from the left wall, and to the left of this door was an alcove which held a tall wardrobe of some dark-stained wood.

Jordan pushed away from the door, started across the room slowly, deliberately, his eyes watching Orcutt. He saw the gun—a compact automatic—slip from the man's pocket, watched the muzzle follow him. He felt a definite tingle, a tightening of his muscles, but gave no outward sign of this, and continued steadily to the door in the wall.



Jordan's curse was unconscious as the macabre picture was revealed: The man jammed in the cabinet was Frank Gage. . . . His face was like tallow, and his eyes were closed.

Orcutt spoke then, and his voice had a different sort of accent and inflection. Jordan was at once aware of this. There was no further attempt to disguise this badge of his associations.

"Listen, guy. You're stickin' your nose in a jam."

"All right," said Jordan. "It's my nose."

"You can't bust in here. The cops're lookin' for you, and I got a damn' good notion to turn you in. What the hell do you want?"

"I'm lookin' for Gage."

"Gage?" Cardoso's surprise seemed quite genuine. "I thought he was to come—"

"You thought hell!" rapped Jordan. He reached for the doorknob. "He came in on the *Stehndam*—but maybe you know it. I want to find out if he's around."

He opened the door, found it led to the bathroom. Closing the door again, he stepped toward the wardrobe. This time Orcutt's voice cracked like a whip.

"Lay off! Or maybe you'd like a slug in the belly. You're askin' for it, and you'll—"

Jordan stopped in front of the wardrobe, turned his head to glance over his shoulder. For one long moment his hard blue eyes met Orcutt's hostile gaze, held it. His chin moved slightly, and little knots rose under the skin at the corners of his jaws. Then he spoke slowly and with deliberate scorn.

"You'll not shoot me, Orcutt. Not here. It would make a hell of a noise. And they hang you for murder in Antados, and they don't go in much for red tape and shyster lawyers."

He turned his back deliberately then, reached for the key in the wardrobe, pulled open the right-hand door.

He was vaguely aware of Cardoso's curse, of Orcutt's angry threats; then of a sudden hollowness at the pit of his stomach, a surge of anger and anxiety.

There, in the bottom of the wardrobe, he saw the bent-kneed legs of a man.

Jordan's curse was unconscious. He yanked open the other door, dropping to one knee as the rest of the macabre picture was revealed.

The man was Frank Gage. His shoulder, the back of his neck, were jammed against one side of the cabinet, his chin on his chest. The face was like tallow, and the eyes were closed.

CHAPTER VI

KILLER'S GAMBLE

AFTER that first moment of shocked surprise, Jordan reached for Gage's pulse. He pulled the man's torso toward him, got an arm around his back, the other around his knees and lifted him across the room to the bed.

Orcutt's voice cut across his thoughts, jerked him back to the reality of the situation.

"He's not dead—yet."

Jordan straightened up, eyes blazing, face flushed. "Drugged."

"Yeah," Orcutt said. "We had to keep him quiet for a while, and"—he glanced at Cardoso—"Esteban knows lots of little uses for drugs. —Don't you, Esteban?"

Jordan moved to a washbowl in one corner of the room, drew a glass of water and came back to Gage. He splashed

the liquid on the man's face, slapped him a few times, massaged the temples with a cold compress made with his handkerchief. When Gage stirred and moved his lips a few minutes later, Jordan forced water down his throat, then turned to Orcutt.

The gunman had moved to one side so that he stood between Jordan and the door; Cardoso stood in front of the window, his arms folded across his chest.

JORDAN tried to suppress his surging anger, to think and speak sanely. Before, he had bluffed Orcutt. Now it would not be so easy. Orcutt would not shoot until he had to, but he would shoot. That was the important thing, and Jordan realized it, accepted the odds. So he started to talk—to find out and fit together the pieces of the murder puzzle that he did not know; to stall until he had a reasonable chance to act. He made his voice sardonically nonchalant.

"I found out about the cablegram you intercepted, Orcutt," he said. "That's how I knew. Bannan wasn't in town when it came!"

"We had to take a chance on that," Orcutt said.

"You got plenty of breaks," Jordan went on. "The fight we had—Bannan and me; and my hauling out this morning, and Bannan sticking me down in the hold."

"We had a tough one too," Orcutt said, and cursed. "This mug." He nodded at Gage. "We didn't expect him, and—"

"You didn't get all of that second cablegram either," Jordan gloated.

"It was dark," snorted Orcutt. "We thought we had the part with the message on."

Gage tried to sit up then, and Orcutt made no attempt to stop him. Gage, his round face worn and haggard, wet his lips, spoke in weak, throaty tones.

"I had the offer, Cliff, but when you didn't answer the cable, I knew something must be up. I grabbed a plane, wired Bannan from Antigua. I got into St. Lucia yesterday noon, and—"

"It's okay," Jordan said, finally releasing the man's hands. "We're still partners and these two guys can't do anything about that."

"That's what you think," Orcutt snapped, and took a wallet from his hip pocket. "Gage signed away his half this morning; that's why we didn't bump him last night."

"I had to, Cliff," Gage said, rubbing his wrists. "They made me—and I was counting on you holding out. I was a fool for getting off the *Stehndam*. That's the whole thing. But I was worried, half crazy you and Bannan'd sell your share to these fellows for twenty-five thousand—and I had to have all three shares to make my deal.

"I was on deck when we got in at three-twenty. Then, a little later, I saw a guy in a rowboat. There was a rope hanging down from the second-class promenade, and"—he hesitated, passed a hand over his forehead, and his voice was miserable as he went on—"well, there wasn't anybody around. So I left a note about my baggage and went down the rope.

"I went aboard Bannan's schooner, got down into the cabin, and then—"

Orcutt spat out an oath. "Talk about your breaks!" he ground out. His fingers tightened on the automatic, and his lean sharp-featured face was glowering, hateful. He went on quickly:

"The deal was okay. It was just business with us. We took the job for a syndicate. They paid expenses and gave us fifty grand to dicker with. We stood to make twenty-five—because you guys were ready to sell.

"They tailed Gage around New York, knew he was playing with another crowd—that's how they knew about that first cable and tipped me off."

Orcutt shifted the gun and began to back toward the bathroom.

"You and Bannan were ready to sell until Bannan got that second wire. We knew something was up when he didn't show up last night. So we went to his boat and waited to find out why. We saw you and him go aboard, saw him bring you out and throw you in the hold. So then we went aboard."

ORCUTT glanced at Cardosa, and a hard, pitiless smile curled his lips.

"And Bannan told us how it was." He shrugged. "And when we argued that he didn't like our methods, he pulled a gun on us, and Esteban had to do his stuff.

"We needed an idea then, so I had to pull one out of the hat. We decided to plant the body, let you out and tip off the cops. When they threw you in the clink, we thought you'd sell out—a guy in that spot needs cash. And it was a natural but for this guy Gage."

Orcutt opened the bathroom door. "He was standing right there in the cabin

doorway when we finished Bannan," he added.

Without taking his eyes off Jordan, he reached back into the little room, and when his hand came in sight it held a thick towel.

"We put the slug on him quick, then took Bannan and carried him over to your boat. And that gave us another idea." Orcutt stepped to a portmanteau, opened it and took out a heavy revolver. "Recognize it?"

FASCINATED, Jordan stared, and the sweat came out on his forehead when he thought of his duffle-bag and how his belongings had been shuffled. He remembered one other thing, bitterly: the sleeping negro who should have been on watch. It was harder to control his voice now. It sounded strangely thready.

"I get it," he said finally. "You framed me for Bannan. You were going to murder Gage with my gun—just to make it real tough, huh?"

"Yeah." Orcutt slipped the automatic into a shoulder holster, covered Jordan with his own gun. "But we couldn't do it then—we wanted his signature on a contract. Gage's body would have been found. And the cops are pretty clever here; I think they'd have been able to check the bullet if we left the gun on your boat."

"Sure," Jordan said stiffly. "And with me in jail, I'd have sold out to you. You wouldn't've said anything about Gage's sale. Only somebody'd've turned up in Georgetown in a month or so with the whole claim tied up."

"You think of things."

Jordan said, "And Bannan was really doing me a favor," absently.

Orcutt said: "What?"

"He wanted to buy me out—but he was making sure I wouldn't sell my third and spoil this other deal before Gage got here. That's why he locked me in the hold."

Orcutt had begun to wrap that thick, long towel about the muzzle of the gun.

Gage, his face still pale, croaked:

"What's he gonna do, Cliff?"

Cardosa protested: "That is not the way. There will be noise, and—"

"You stick to the knife," Orcutt rapped; "that's your way. This is mine, and the mug gives me a tip. I mighta plugged him and remembered about the noise afterward."

Jordan's eyes swiveled quickly, measured the distances to Orcutt and Cardosa.

The swart Brazilian still stood near the window, his arms folded. Orcutt, deliberately busy with the towel, was about four feet away. But the gun muzzle was level.

Jordan made up his mind right then. He could read that merciless look in Orcutt's blue-green eyes as the fellow held the gun in his right hand and flipped the long end of the towel around the gun barrel.

Panic gripped him for an instant, and his throat was thick and dry. So he began to talk again, hurriedly. Surprisingly enough, as he talked and moved, the panic fled, leaving in its wake a cold, vindictive rage which steadied his nerves.

"YOU can't get away with it," he said harshly.

"We can try," Orcutt sneered. "We're going to dump Gage tonight—where he can be found. Because he saw us take Bannan, and he's got to go. There's one thing you forgot, Jordan. Here, or anywhere else, they can only hang you once. With Gage alive, they'll stretch our necks; with him dead, we got a chance."

"And where," Jordan said jerkily, "do I fit?"

"We'll take you out so far they'll never find you."

"And you'll only have Gage's share in the claim."

"Half'll be enough to start with. That claim's gotta be renewed, and if you don't show up—"

Orcutt went on, but Jordan did not hear him. Reason told him the fellow had small chance of getting away with the crazy murder-plan. But reason also told him that some half-mad obsession, a madness of greed and the lure of the gold claim, possessed the man. Held in its grip he was going to try—and it was true: there was little to lose now.

Jordan's eyes flicked to the now nearly completed muffling of the gun-muzzle, steadied there.

"Wait!" he said thickly, and put fear into his voice. "For Gawd's sake, wait a minute!" The eyes held steady on the arc-like movement of the towel end. "We can make a deal if—"

The sentence stopped in his throat as he moved. Perfect balance on his adjusted stance gave him a catlike take-off, and one step put him within reach.

Orcutt stiffened, tried to jerk back as realization struck home. Jordan saw the death-message in the man's eyes as his fingers fastened on the tip of the

towel. He jerked viciously, desperately. At the same moment there was a muted roar and a wisp of smoke puffed out of the wadded towel.

Then Orcutt cursed. The towel whipped toward Jordan, unwound as though he were spinning a top, then came free with the gun, slamming it back against the wardrobe.

Jordan struck once with his left as he leaped past Orcutt, and the odor of scorched cloth was in his nostrils. The fellow staggered back, and Jordan ignored him as he dived at the gun.

His right hand covered the butt, snatched it up as he turned his head. Then he saw Cardoso's cocked wrist, the lightning downward sweep of the forearm. He ducked instinctively and threw himself to one side, realizing as he did so that Gage had given him a moment's respite by throwing a pillow in the Brazilian's face.

The quick, stabbing pain on the outside of his left arm came simultaneously with the roar of the gun, the shock of recoil in his wrist. Then something pinned his left arm fast against the wardrobe; held there on one knee, he swung the right to cover Orcutt, barked: "Drop it!"

Orcutt's hand had yanked the automatic to the V made by his coat lapels. He did not hesitate long. His eyes bulged, mirrored sudden fear. He let go the gun, and it slipped down inside of his coat and struck the toe of one shoe.

JORDAN glanced at Cardoso. The fellow, one hand on the foot-rail of the bed, was trying to brace himself upright. There was a peculiar vacant smile on his dark face, and on the left side of his white jacket was a spot. It may have been a hole, or a little circle of blood. The hand slipped as Jordan watched, and Cardoso fell over on the rail, bounced off and struck the floor on his back.

Gage, wide-eyed and frightened-looking, seemed to force himself off the bed. Staggering to Jordan, he grabbed the carved haft of the knife which had grazed Jordan's arm and pinned the shirt-sleeve to the wardrobe.

He was still tugging at the knife when the door swung open, banged back against the wall, and Patrick and Robert, revolvers in hand, seemed to wedge there in the opening.

Jordan told the whole story in short, clipped sentences before he thought to

ask how the two policemen had found them.

Patrick grunted and said: "We've been waiting in the next room."

Before he could continue, a small-bodied negro came in. He had a stenographer's notebook in his hand; and seeing him, Robert crossed to the bed, pulled it away from the wall and disclosed the black disk of a dictograph.

ORCUTT, heretofore silent and glowering, gasped out an oath. Gage went open-mouthed, and Jordan had trouble with his words for a minute.

"You been in there—that thing was up all the time?" he said finally.

"Yes," Robert said. "We strung it up while Orcutt and Cardosa went to dinner. We didn't have sufficient proof as it was to convict anyone. But with this evidence, with Gage's story—"

"But," broke in Jordan, his lean face knotted in doubt, "how did you know I was—"

Patrick coughed and said: "We saw you come in."

"Saw me?" Jordan said. "Then why didn't you pinch me? You had me all set for the job."

"No," said Robert, "we didn't. We had to hold you; you know that. But I doubt whether we could have convicted you. Personally, I thought you were telling the truth. There were two things—one thing especially—"

"What?" cut in Jordan. "What things?"

"The wound. I thought all along the knife was thrown. It is difficult to thrust a knife straight in. Either it is thrust up—as the Italians often do; or it is a downward blow. Of course I could not substantiate that. But the suit—that was enough to ruin our case.

"You see—" He held up his hand as Jordan tried to speak. "Everyone identified your wearing of it. We questioned your man Antone closely. He swears you had it on when you came aboard. The arrowroot- and the tar-stains were there."

"I don't see—" Jordan began.

"You would have, if you had not been so excited about this—er—what you call plant. Somebody carried Bannan to your boat. You could have managed it. But hardly without ruining that suit. You forget there was a trail of blood all the way."

Jordan exclaimed: "So I'm just plain

dumb, huh?" He spoke, realizing fully the chances he had taken. "But after I ran out on you—"

"I learned a few things in the States," Robert broke in. "Your American criminals are different from ours. Our methods don't always work with them. But you,"—Robert grinned,—"well, I persuaded the Sergeant to let you stay at liberty. I thought you might get results—with your own rules—quicker than we could. Down here we like convictions with our arrests—and we could have picked you up any time if I was wrong."

Jordan's worried look vanished, and a grin relieved the set look at his mouth. He said, "Well, I'll be damned," and then suddenly scowled again. "But how did you know I was coming here?"

"Oh, that?" Robert hesitated. "Well, your fiancée, Miss Allen, tipped us off."

"Tipped—" Jordan gasped. "She—she did it when she went downstairs in the Seaside Hotel to see if everything was okay!"

"Probably," Patrick said. "Y'see, she made us promise to do the job her way before she would tell what she knew. Then she said you thought Orcutt and Cardosa were the guilty ones; told us you would be coming along, and couldn't we be on hand to get the proof—sort of look after you."

PATRICK frowned, pulled at his nose and made noises in his throat.

"But hell," he grunted, "she needn't have worried. You didn't need any help. The dictograph'll make it easier, I guess. But you got Gage—he's enough. And you mopped up so damn' fast we didn't have a chance. The way you handled 'em, it was"—he glanced at Robert—"up the bag."

Robert frowned, said, "You mean *in* the bag!"

"That's what I said," growled Patrick. "In the bag."

Jordan spoke quickly, kept grinning. "She was supposed to sail tonight. I'd like—I mean, I wonder if—"

"She's downstairs," Patrick said. "Wanted to wait."

"Well, could I go down—now?"

"Certainly—of course." Patrick tugged at his mustaches, cocked one bushy eyebrow. "You'll have to stay for the inquest; but for tonight—why, just carry on. Go on, and"—this time his glance at Robert was triumphant,—"and do your stuff."

THE END.

"Better a foot of Norse soil than this whole wilderness!" cried Halfdan, and the sullen men murmured an assent.



ARMS and MEN

I FOUND my old friend Martin Burnside in a vile humor—a sure sign that he had made some discovery. His queer collection of arms and armor absorbed his time, money, brains and good humor; he practically lived for nothing else.

When I entered his study, I noted several Indian shields of painted hide piled on his desk. He was busily assembling some fragments of pitted, rust-eaten iron.

"Sit down," he growled, peering at me over his spectacles. "Who was the first white man in Minnesota and among the Sioux Indians?"

"You mean the Dacotah tribes," I rejoined loftily. He grunted.

"Bah! Who was the first white man among 'em?"

"Nicolas Perrot." I had him there, anyhow. "I've unearthed his supposedly lost memoirs, in that mad jumble of dictation and documents which La Potherie called a history of Canada. It's never been translated—"

"You're a fool!" he snapped at me. "Perrot was not the first white man there by three hundred years. Look at those war-shields on the desk. What do they look like?"

"Shields," I said. "You're not claiming a shield is a weapon?"

"Of course it is. Not only an arm of defense, but one of offense as well, in many cases. Study the history of armor. But look at those—Sioux, Blackfoot, Mandan, Pawnee. Four of them. All the same shape. All alike. Why?"

"I'll bite," was my response. "Why?"

"Confound it, don't they suggest anything to you?" He struck a match and held it to his pipe. "Viking shields, of course: more correctly, bucklers."

This was a bit thick. "So Leif Ericson taught the Injuns about 'em, eh?" And I chuckled. "Come, Martin, don't be absurd. The Eastern Indians never used shields. Only the plains tribes, like the ones you've just mentioned, used shields. The tribes who rode horseback—"

"No tribes rode horseback before the Spanish conquered Mexico," he giped, and that was true. "But you make exactly my point. The Eastern tribes didn't use shields. The Western tribes did. Perrot and Nicolet found 'em using these same round shields."

"True enough," I commented, not quite sure what he was driving at. "But your notions about the Vikings are silly. They were in Greenland and on the east



VII—The Shield of Arngrim

MINNESOTA—A. D. 1362! The famous Kensington rune-stone, recording the death of ten members of a Scandinavian party in the year 1362, is the basis of this, one of the most vivid stories in a series depicting the development of man's weapons down the ages.

By
H. BEDFORD-JONES

Illustrated by Harvé Stein

coast of New England. The Western tribes, in fact, didn't have contact with Leif Ericsson or any other Norsemen," I went on. "There's no similarity anyhow, except in shape. These Indian shields are made of hide on a wicker frame. The Norse shields were round bucklers of wood studded and rimmed with iron."

Martin grinned derisively.

"You admit a circle is a circle, huh? And the Norse shields never changed shape like those in southern Europe. All right. Why are the shields of the plains tribes exactly the size and shape of Norse bucklers?"

"They got the notion of shields from Mexico, as they got horses."

"Bah! Here's the reason right here." And Martin slapped his hand down on a pile of home-made movie reels. "All this summer I've been making a movie, step by step. I got a bunch of college kids to act, told them what to do, and here it is. Now, I want you to translate this into a story. It's crude, of course, but you can put it into words. That's your business. Come along."

He jumped up and led me into his big gallery, and displayed the movie outfit. It was one of those new seven-hundred-dollar affairs for home talkies. Martin Burnside never skimped money when it was a question of his hobby.

Proud as Punch, he bustled around, shoved me into a seat, and prepared to throw his work of art on the screen at the end of the gallery. Rather bewil-

dered by the whole thing, I resigned myself to be bored by amateur photography and Martin's eccentric notions. Suddenly his voice leaped out at me.

"Hey! D'you know how long it would take to travel by canoe from the foot of Hudson Bay to Minnesota?"

"Sure," I said. "The Canadians repeatedly went overland, winter or summer. To Minnesota from the bay, by canoe—hm! Approximately two weeks, under ideal conditions."

His chuckle deepened into a laugh; why, I failed to see at the moment. He switched off the lights. The screen leaped into a blur of radiance. There was a flash showing Martin himself unearthing some bits of iron from among tree-roots; it was entitled "Mandan, North Dakota, 1934." I recognized those same bits of iron I had seen on his desk. Then came a title: "Minnesota, 1362."

And suddenly I found myself not bored at all, but caught up by abrupt interest. He had slathered brains and money on this picture, and it had plenty of drawbacks; but—good Lord! Where on earth had he found her?

SHE was an Indian girl; no doubt of that! And not dressed like a movie *Minnehaha*, either. In fact, she wore no more than the law allowed. A slim, lovely wild thing, alive with grace, aflame with the intangible perfection of youth. She had been running hard. One could fairly feel the bursting energy of

her heaving breasts, her duskily flushed cheeks, her flashing eyes. She was at work cutting up a deer with a knife; now and again she paused to admire the iron blade and its work, careless of the blood that bedewed her hands and arms.

SUDDENLY the brush was trampled aside and a man appeared—a white man, to whom she looked up with an eager laugh. He was neither young nor old. A golden-red beard flared over his massive chest; a steel cap held down his shaggy hair; his leather garments were torn, stained, ragged. There was something tremendous about him, beyond the mere physical size, as he stood panting, bow in hand. The vital force of him hit out like a blow.

"Man's work for man's kill, my girl," he said. "Put up your knife."

"Woman's work, among my people." And laughing again, she rose. "You hit him, but I ran him down! And this knife you gave me—ah, it makes life all wonderful! Like you, Arngrim."

They looked one at the other. Rough was the man, massive of bone and thigh and arm, but his face softened wondrously under her gaze; and she, before those piercing, wide blue eyes of his, drew closer. Her laughter stilled. Awe struggled with admiration in her lovely bronze features. Then he swept out his arm, gathered her to him, and for a moment held her in impulsive embrace, brushing his lips against her hair.

"You outran me, and well I know why," said he gently. "To be ahead of me in case of ambush, in case the savages lay in wait. Ah, these Skraelings, these wild folk! You are a miracle, to have sprung of them. But—"

Suddenly she pushed him away, sprang clear, pointed.

"Look!" she cried. "After all your orders—look! Now they'll be on us, past all doubt. Now they'll come, and not in peace, either."

Arngrim followed her pointing finger, and anger darkened his eyes. Above the trees crept up plumes of whitish smoke, drifting from some point of lower ground.

"All right. Keep an eye out while I finish this work," he said.

With the sword that hung at his thigh, he dropped upon the deer and fell to the task. Hardly a moment, it seemed, ere he had lifted the cleaned animal about his shoulders and was ready. She caught up his bow and led the way.

They traveled fast and far. The forest broke away at last; the two of them came out upon the shore of a long and narrow lake, studded with islets. A hundred feet from the shore was a small island of rocks and a few trees. Here was a camp—a few tents, with numbers of men in evidence. On the shore were five large canoes of more northern make. Arngrim hailed the island. Four men got into a canoe and paddled over. He in the stern, brawny and black of hair, laughed jeeringly at sight of the deer, and eyed Arngrim without love.

"Small rations for thirty hungry mouths, Arngrim Jonsson!" he declared, as the canoe scraped the beach. "Luckily, we found a bear in the swamp on the other side, and there's meat enough on the fires. So we'll keep this little deer till the morrow."

Arngrim seated himself, and took the girl between his knees.

"Food enough, Black Halfdan," he said gruffly. "Asa, here, tells me that before long we'll be in the country of great beasts, larger than the musk-oxen up north, who travel in immense herds and make fitting sport."

"Tales of a savage woman," quoth Halfdan. "You've named her and taken her for wife; but we don't have to believe her fancies. As soon as we've eaten, you'll have a few things to settle among all of us. We'll go no farther on this mad journey."

Arngrim laughed. "Then you may take a longer and quicker road to hell."

"Not if we can help it," spoke up another of the men, sullenly.

Arngrim made no reply. Except for Halfdan, these other men had none of his size and appearance. The old Viking breed still cropped out here and there, but for the most part was gone with an earlier age.

THEY quickly reached the island. Here were thirty men in all, and over their cooking-fires were fish and bear-meat at the broil.

"Did not Asa warn us to make small fires with no smoke?" Arngrim demanded angrily as he stepped ashore. "What were my orders?"

"Bah! We've seen no Skraelings. She's always made friends with them; and what of it? We can handle these naked red savages," said an older, gray-faced man with very cunning eyes. He sat before a huge flat rock, split from a larger boulder.

"So you likewise laugh at my orders, Ketil Craft?" Arngrim said slowly. The other gave him a deliberate look and nodded.

"Aye. We're holding council when we've eaten. We've followed you far enough, Arngrim Jonsson. Look at this stone, would you? Fair and smooth on which to carve runes, and leave a record of our coming—"

"Be damned to your runes and you as well!" growled Arngrim, and strode to the tent amid the rocks that he shared with Asa.

"Strange!" said Arngrim. "I can see blood everywhere—on these stones and in this water. . . . We came a weary way across angry seas to reach this place—and now these men would pass that long journey again, to get whence they came! For what?"

"And suppose death greets us—greet you and me—there in the south?" Asa asked softly.

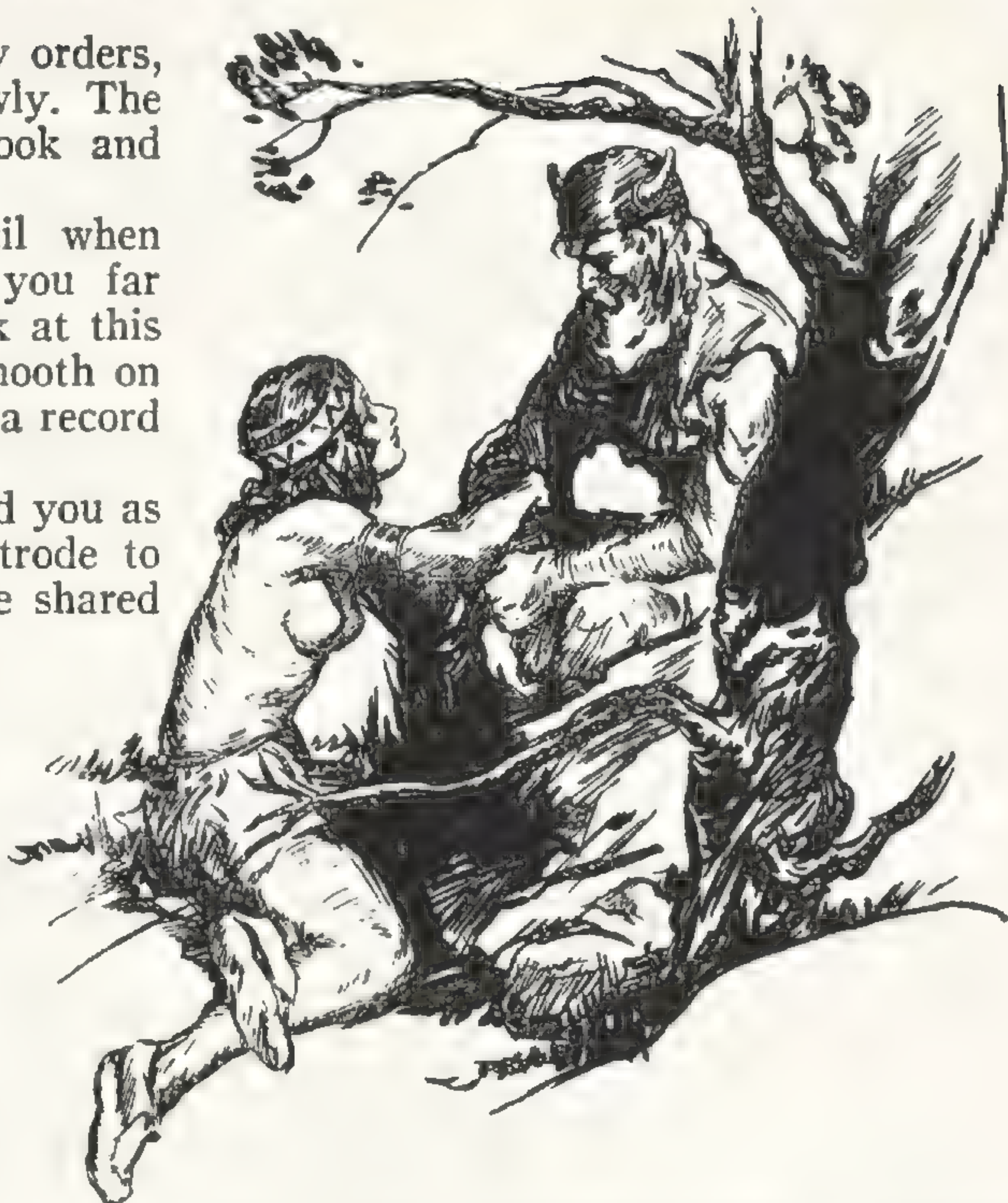
She regarded him anxiously as he put down his bow and cap and leather jerkin. From a recess of the tent he took a shield, fair and round, rimmed and studded with iron. He put the steel cap over his coiled bowstrings, placed the shield over the cap and bow and sword. Then, with a word to her, he made his way to the cooking-fires. He took a strip of meat from one and carried it back to her.

Now he strode back and joined his men, and sat down among them. They avoided his keen blue eyes and talked among themselves. Halfdan and Ketil, the two leaders under him, sat together at one side. His gaze touched upon them with contempt.

The meat and fish were lifted off the spits. Oat-cakes were scraped from the ashes. In more or less ominous silence, the meal was wolfed and washed down. Then Ketil came to his feet.

"Ha!" spoke out Arngrim. "Because you can read runes and scratch them, Ketil Craft, you're becoming a leader now?"

"That is as it may be," Ketil said calmly. "Here are eight Swedes and twenty-two Norsemen. You, Arngrim Jonsson, led us from Norway last year to learn what remained of the Greenland settlements; we found nothing. You led us through the narrow strait into the



great bay. We sailed down to the end of the bay. We wintered there. We left our ships and comrades there at your bidding, and started up the rivers in these frail canoes to explore the land, at your orders. We have come for two weeks, starving, slaving, getting nowhere. There is nowhere to go. Here is the end of our road by water."

"Aye, and the beginning of our road by land," said Arngrim.

"So say you, who have found a wife and trust to her words," Ketil rejoined. "Against her I say nothing; but it is in my mind that she has stolen away your brains. This land holds nothing but savage Skraelings, untracked wilderness, a fight for life, and another winter to face. It is my rede that we return to our ship and men, and go whence we came."

"I say no to that." Arngrim stood up suddenly. "We are thirty men. Back yonder at the great bay we traded for rich furs. There we found Asa, who became my wife and guides us in all things. She has told us of this country and what lies in it. When the rivers were open, we came to explore it. After two weeks, do your hearts grow so faint?"

"Life looks good," spat out one of the sullen men.

"Coward's words!" said Arngrim. "Asa says that we are come into the country of a great people; she can make friends with them, once we make contact with them. Warriors, are they? So are we.

Thirty of us are worth a thousand of them. Better to spend another year or two in this country, learn more about it, take home a rich cargo, than to go running back to Norway where the Black Death rages, and crops are thin—"

"Better a foot of Norse soil than this whole wilderness!" cried out Halfdan the Black loudly, and the sullen men murmured quick assent to this.

ARNGRIM eyed him and laughed. "Why not six feet of this soil here, Halfdan? For you or me, as it may befall. Out with your weapons!"

"Not I," said Halfdan, refusing the challenge sturdily. "To fight among ourselves were mad folly; we'll have none of it."

"Aye," went up a quick chorus of voices. "Fight one, fight all, Arngrim!"

"Halfdan for leader!" cried Ketil Craft, and there was rousing assent. "Halfdan and Norway, and home again!"

"So?" Arngrim's gaze swept the sullen bearded faces. "And what of me?"

"You, Arngrim Jonsson, remain as leader—if you lead us home again," said Halfdan. "We have supplies at the camp, a day north of here, and furs enough to load down the canoes. We can get fish here in plenty. Remain as leader—"

"Hell swallow the lot of you!" spoke out Arngrim. "I'm going on, with Asa for company. You understand? On!"

"That is as suits you; it's your choice, not ours," said Ketil Craft. "We have wives and children at home. You have yours with you."

"Here ends our trail, Arngrim." Black Halfdan spoke out with quick impulse. "Why fight over it? To go farther by water is impossible. If you go on with the maid, you'll have fair share of our gear and goods, taking what you will."

"Thanks!" Arngrim smiled. He looked at man after man, the inner force of him striking out at them in disdain and scorn. "What! Not one man to go with Arngrim Jonsson into the unknown land? By God, the woman who goes with me is worth the lot of you! Very well, then. There's one thing I see plainly; not a man of you will ever see Norway again, or Sweden, or be heard of more in this world. And it comes to me that soon enough will be blood in this place, and groans of men. That is your affair, not mine. Yet your offer was fair enough, Halfdan." He turned and held out his hand. "Part friends. We've gone far

together. The bitterness is yours, not mine."

Black Halfdan struck hands, and it was settled.

"You'll not take your shield?" spoke up Ketil Craft. "One who goes afoot should go light, Arngrim. That is the only shield among us, and I would buy it of you."

"With what?" said Arngrim in scorn. "That shield was a gift from my foster-father, and he was fey. Said he, it would go far with me, and save me when other men died; and I have yet to see that day. The things I left buried in the camp a day north of here, keep as ye will. . . . Well, Halfdan? Give your orders."

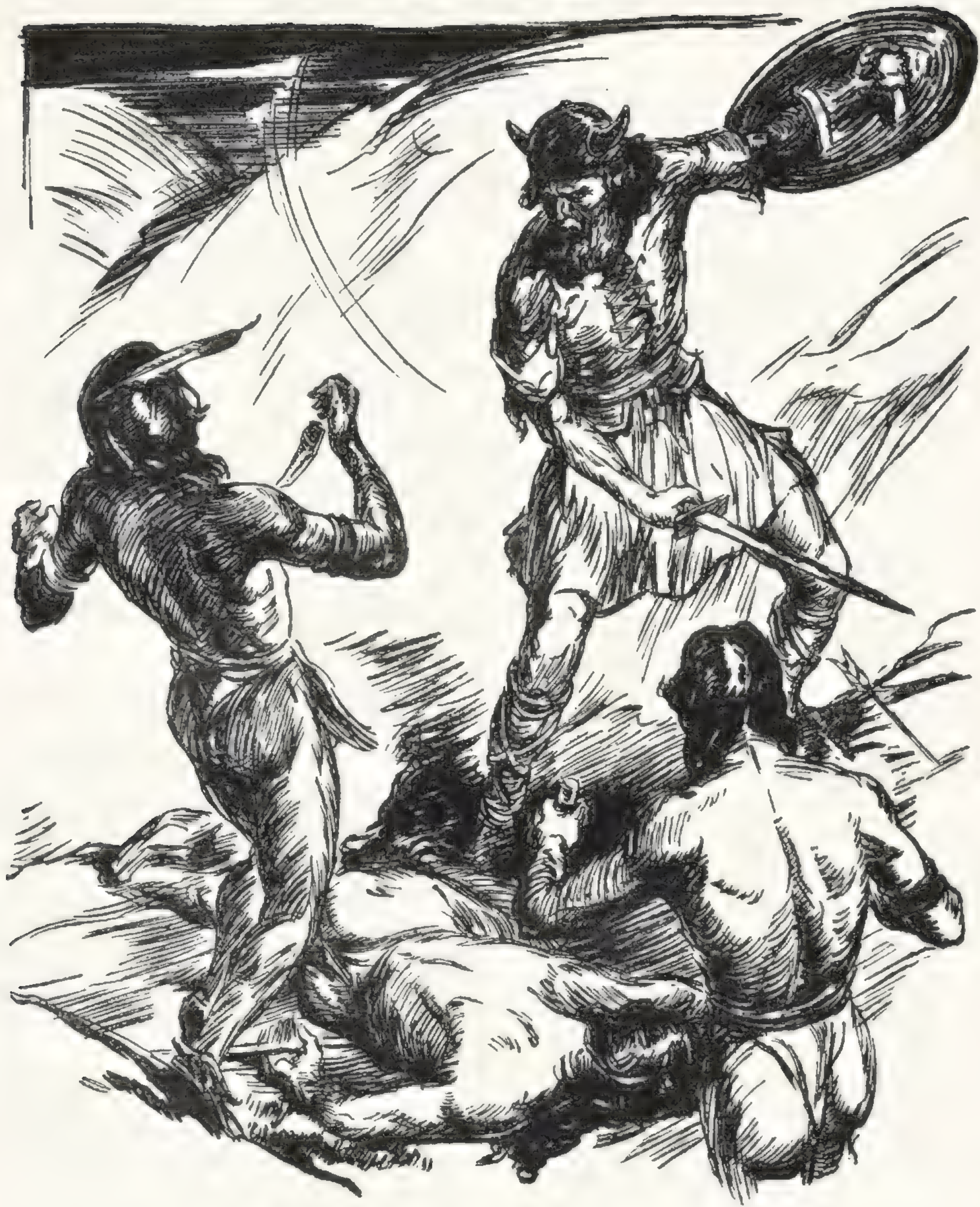
"I've none for you," said Halfdan the Black. "It is my will that we leave here tomorrow, go back to the camp one march north, take up the buried goods and furs, and seek our ship again. Tonight, before dawn, fifteen of us will go out with the nets to get fish for the journey. Until then, do as you like."

So was all arranged. Ketil Craft bent again over the big flat stone, tracing runes on it with a charred stick. He had a chisel that would cut the soft stone, and after a time was heard the *tap-tap* as he worked.

SUNSET cut all short. Arngrim sat with Asa, working over fresh moccasins for the trail ahead. These two were one, and had been one from their first meeting. The Indian lass was skilled in many things. Her father had come out of this land into the far north, and she knew the tongues and sign-talk of all the tribes. With her, Arngrim welcomed the future eagerly, sniffing the new horizon as a dog scents game. The vast unknown land, the strange tribes, the bison and other creatures all new to him, drew at his spirit.

He sat apart with her, by their shelter among the rocks, listening to the men at talk around the fires, watching the glinting water and the swinging stars.

"Strange!" he said. "I can see blood everywhere, on these stones, in the water. Well, that is as may be. Men, these men, are still stranger. We came a weary way across angry seas, into the great unknown bay, to reach this place. And now they are a-dread and would pass over all that long journey again. For what? To get whence they came. To sit drinking beer in the lower hall, and prate of where they've been, and



Two more Indians were dashing forward—but Arngrim caught out his sword as they came, and strode forth.

watch their women give suck to brats whom the plague will kill. Bah!"

The slender, strong fingers of Asa caressed his iron wrist and massive hand.

"And suppose death greets us—greet you and me—there in the south?" she asked softly. "These Dacotah tribes are fierce and powerful and cruel, with bow and spear, and terrible in fight."

Arngrim laughed. "I'm no child at that business myself. Death is sure. With you at my side, it is a joy if it come a little early, a gift of the gods if late. We two together, heart of me, and the world's a small place!"

She drew closer against him, and her fingers clasped on his. . . .

The night drew on; the fires died down, a single man on watch. Once Asa awakened, and caught in swift fear of dream at the man beside her; she ceased trembling as his arm crept about her in sleep. The sentry by the fire was humming an old refrain.

She awakened again, later, toward the dawn. Men were astir now. Canoes were being run out. The net they had brought along was being made ready. Fifteen of the men, Ketil and Halfdan leading them, paddled away into the

north end of the long lake, where fish were plentiful for the taking; this south end was too shallow.

The dawn brightened and darkened again. The sentinel put more wood on the fire. It caught and flickered up. Then—that man went into the air with one leap, and screamed as he leaped; and he fell again with a feathered shaft through his body.

The war-cry broke forth. Dim shapes fringed the shore and the tumbled rocks—naked savages who had swum across to the island with brush and tree-limbs. Forth rushed the Norsemen, catching up spear and sword, piling out into the firelight where the driving rain of arrows searched them out. Some broke and fled, fought a space, and died with stone axes drinking their lives; but most died there beside the fire.

It was over swiftly, as the daylight grew.

Over, yes; but the red men ventured not into the camp—not yet. They prowled about the outskirts, cautiously waiting as the light grew stronger. A wounded man stirred and lifted himself. Instantly half a dozen arrows smote him down into death. A single canoe remained, drawn well up on the beach.

The instinct of these raiders was sure. Presently a tall figure moved and came into sight from the little shelter among the rocks. It was Arngrim Jonsson, in steel cap and leather jerkin, his shield a-glitter on his arm.

He approached the fire, which daylight was now dimming, gathering spears from dead hands and tossing them back toward his shelter, and arrows also. A yell arose, and shafts were loosed, slipping down the gray daylight with deathly fingers. One splintered from his helm; the shield stopped the others.

He did not retreat or draw back. His sword came out. Now, with the marvelous agility of the old Norse weapon-play, he met single arrows with the blade, laughing as he cut them in mid-air—or deftly thrusting up his shield to avert them, if many came together.

ALL this came and passed in a brief moment or two. Then, unharmed, he regained the shelter where Asa waited. He knelt, gave her the shield to hold, and took up his bow. The bitter iron-tipped arrows sang, and the death-yell of warriors echoed along the island shore. So matters stood for a space.

The daylight was strong now, the sun streaking the sky red. The Indians were working forward among the rocks, until at closer range their flint-headed shafts could pierce jerkin or shield. Putting Asa back under cover to use the bow if need might be, Arngrim stood forth and waited, the sunrise glimmering on shield and beard and steel cap. They could not reach him from behind, and in front was a narrow space. With their stone axes, and bows and long spears, these red men were at momentary check.

Asa cried out sharply—but Arngrim had seen the spear streaking toward him. This too was part of the old weapon-play. He caught it in full hurtling flight, caught and flung it back whence it came, fruitless. Suddenly snatching up one of his own spears, he let drive with it, and the iron clove through a naked body in the brush, and the death-yell peeled anew.

NOW the shafts pelted in thick and fast, but Arngrim crouched with the round shield ever before him, breaking off the arrows that stuck in the wood.

“My foster-father spoke the truth,” he said to Asa with grim humor. “This day men are dying, and the shield serves me well.”

He ended with a grunt, as a flint sheared his leather jerkin, coming under the shield. He caught the shaft and broke it off, but blood trickled from his side. No great matter; but a wound was a wound.

The arrows died out—the redskins had no more. Suddenly one of them rushed out into full sight, war-club a-swing, face and body hideously painted, medicine-bag about his neck. A tall fellow, this, marvelously wide in the shoulders, uttering a challenging cry which could not be mistaken. Asa called sharp protest, but Arngrim heeded her not. He moved forward a few paces, spear in one hand, shield in the other, and with a yell the redskin came rushing for him.

There that man got his death quickly, for his club was aloft when the iron spear drove into his body. He fell in mid-leap and twisted the spear from Arngrim’s grasp. Like a flash two more Indians were dashing forward, others behind them. But Arngrim caught out his sword as they came, and strode forth at them as they leaped and struck.

A war-club struck the shield and swerved, and that man’s arm was lopped off. The other took a thrust of the shield

full in the face, staggering him, for the iron-rimmed edge drew blood. The sword took his life also, and as others thronged in, Asa drew bow from the shelter, and sent shafts among them. They broke back and leaped to hiding again, their yells pealing up. Arngrim backed to the shelter.

"Who are they?" he demanded. "Know you the tribe?"

"My father's tribe, of the Dacotah nation," Asa responded. "Oh, you are magnificent, Arngrim! No other man could meet them as you—"

SHE broke off as one of the redskins, unarmed, a hand extended in the peace sign, came gingerly into sight. She called to him. He stared in amazement, then strode more swiftly forward and halted, face to face with Arngrim. A huge man this, of some years, but built as though carved from bronze. A feather was twisted in his hair.

Eye for eye, he met the gaze of Arngrim, his gaunt features implacable and stern. Then his eye flashed. He spoke, and the girl made halting response. He began to talk in the universal sign-language.

Asa came forth without fear and made answer, more readily now. Then she caught the arm of Arngrim.

"This man is a chief," she exclaimed. "A war-chief. That was his son you killed."

"So?" said Arngrim. "Does he want atonement, then? By God, he'll get it!"

"You do not understand," she said swiftly. "He says that if you will take the place of his son, he will adopt you. He says you are a great fighter, that you will bring honor to the tribe with your weapons."

"Ha! This is something different," said Arngrim. "What is his word worth?"

"Everything," she responded. "It is an offer of great honor. It means that we can go with them, if you like—"

"And what of my men whom they've killed?"

"You have killed theirs."

"True," said Arngrim, and his blue eyes lit up. "Go with them, eh? And will they take you as well? Ask him."

"Yes," she said, after a quick interchange of signs.

"What of our wounded? Look you, put the question to him." Arngrim spoke eagerly, swiftly. "Tell him to draw off his men. We'll put the wounded under cover and leave them; and go with him.



Ketil crouched over the flat stone with his chisel and the *tap-tap* of his blows came steadily, as he worked upon the runes he had traced.

No plundering. None of our gear is to be touched."

The girl spoke, and talked with her fingers. The chief assented gravely. He turned and walked away. His warriors came from their shelters and joined him at the edge of the shore. Presently he turned and signed, and Asa broke into quick laughter.

"Good, good! You become his son, I become his daughter, Arngrim. It is our chance to go with them if you say the word."

"Aye," said Arngrim. "Search out the wounded, while I keep you covered."

Five of the Norsemen were alive. When Asa had bandaged their wounds, Arngrim lifted them into shelter. Then, with his weapons, he went to the shore, Asa beside him, and waited while the redskins ran out the one canoe there. For a moment his eye flashed over the bloody encampment. He looked up the lake and saw nothing; the other canoes were not in sight.

"Ready!" said Asa.

It was the moment of decision. He hesitated briefly, looking again at these coppery savages, whose war-paint and naked bodies were foreign to everything he had known. The old chief came to him, made the peace sign, looked him in the eye. Arngrim reached out, clapped him on the shoulder, and broke into a laugh.

"Done with you!" he exclaimed vibrantly, and stepped into the canoe. . . .

A little later in the morning the four canoes came creeping back, heavily laden down with fish, for the catch had been good. That of Halfdan was first to descry something amiss, and came on with awkwardly flashing paddles.

The others followed; and so Ketil Craft and the others stepped ashore where the dead greeted them, and the rocky shore ran all red with blood. The wounded men cried out, and amid dismay and consternation the others brought them forth and heard the story of what had passed.

"It was an evil day when we changed captains," said one. "Arngrim foretold this thing last night."

Halfdan the Black sent two men to get the canoe visible on the farther shore, where Arngrim had left it. Then he called the others about him.

"Five men are sore hurt," he said. "It is my rede that they stay behind, with five sound men, and two canoes, to leave here in a day or two. The other ten of us, take three canoes and push hard northward by the trail we came, to find our comrades and ship. Then we'll come back to aid the slower party."

"We?" repeated Ketil Craft. "Which of us twain goes, and which stays?"

"For that, draw lots," said Halfdan. "He who stays, picks five men."

This was agreed, and the lots were drawn. It fell to Ketil Craft to remain here. He picked five men, who disliked the matter but could help it nothing.

A half-hour later the ten under Halfdan departed. And when they had gone, Ketil crouched over the flat stone with his chisel and a stone ax which the raiders had left behind. The *tap-tap* of his blows came steadily, as he worked upon the runes which he had traced—runes that told this whole story plainly.

THERE indeed the story ended, as the film Martin Burnside ran off had ended. I showed him the written pages, and he nodded over them approvingly.

"Fair enough, fair enough," he said. "But there's another reel I haven't finished yet, and it makes the end of the story."

"Then there is an end?" I said, rather mockingly. "Come, Martin! You can't be serious about all this balderdash. It makes a pretty story, and a fanciful one—"

"Fanciful!" he echoed angrily. "It's true, every word of it!"

"Because you filmed it?" I gibed. "No, no, Martin—that won't do! You know perfectly well that history, even tradition, demands some sort of evidence."

With a snort, he fumbled among the papers on his desk, and drew out a photograph, with a scrap of paper. The photograph showed a tall flat stone which was inscribed with runes.

"You never heard of that?" he said grimly. "Read the paper. It's a translation of the runes on the stone."

I read:

"Eight Swedes twenty-two Norsemen on exploration trip through western regions. We had camp by two skerries one day journey north. We were out and fished one day. When we came home we found ten men red with blood and dead. Ave Maria! Save us from evil! We have sent ten of our party to look for our ship fourteen days' journey from this island. Year 1362."

"What is this, some hoax?" I demanded, frowning at it.

"Hoax? It's the rune-stone that was found near Kensington, Minnesota, in 1897," said Martin Burnside exultantly. "Historical societies have investigated and pronounced it genuine. There are records of this expedition sent from Norway to find the Greenland settlers. The ejaculation to the Virgin is something no faker could have known; it was in common use at the time, for those were the years of the Black Death."

I hesitated. He went on quickly:

"Besides, excavations near where this stone was found have uncovered Norse weapons, or the remains of them."

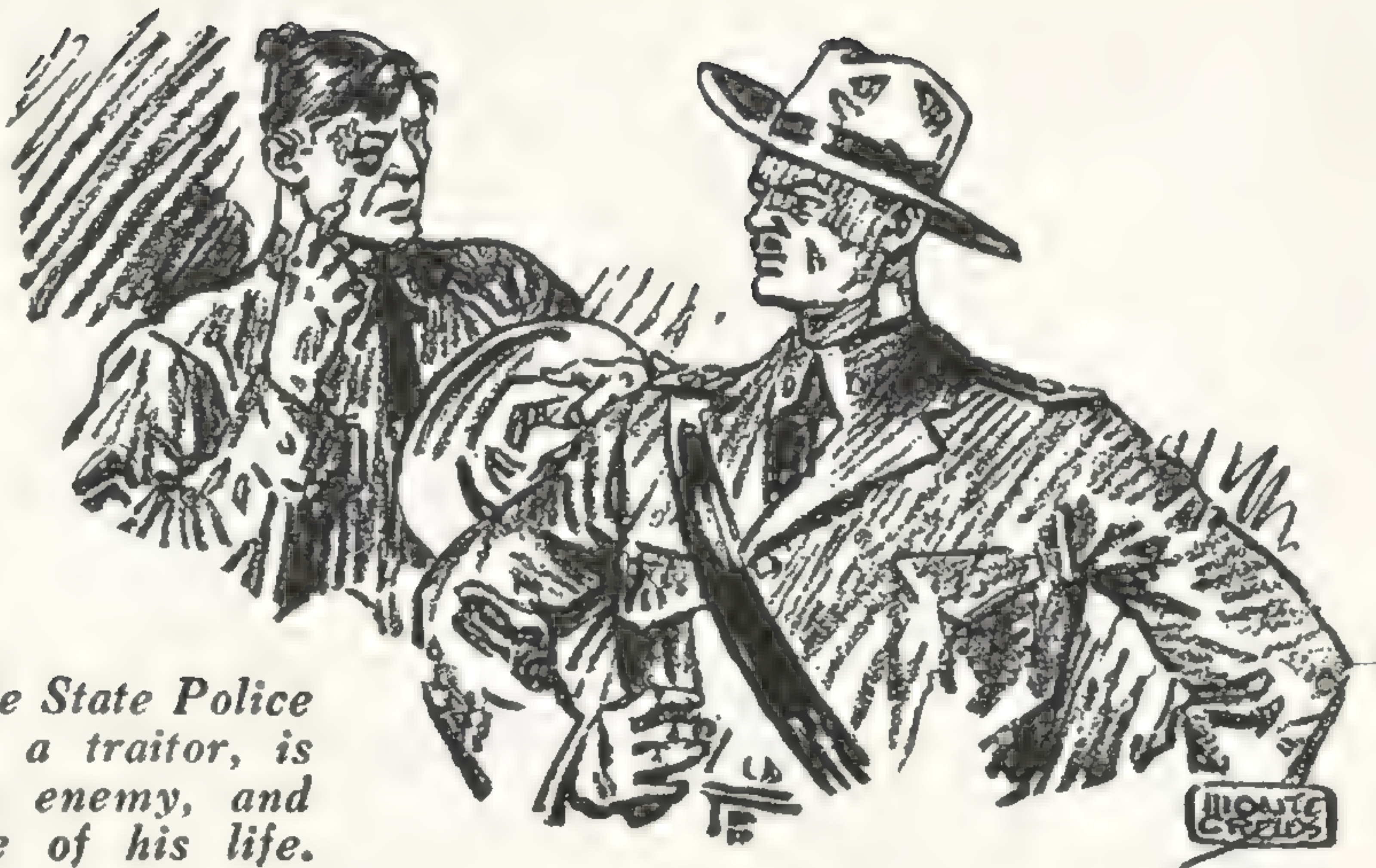
"Which," I said, "has absolutely nothing to do with the shield theory."

"No?" Martin Burnside reached for more photographs. "Here's the pictorial record of a find I made myself in a burial mound near Mandan, North Dakota. Look at it! The grave of Arngrim Jonsson. And here's what I took from the grave—these bits of pitted old iron—the iron mountings of his shield, understand? The shield that taught the Sioux and the plains tribes something new about arms and weapons, my friend."

Martin Burnside had won again, no doubt about that.

The next story in this fascinating series deals with the Catalan Company and the introduction of that deadly weapon the crossbow.

"Ran against a door, sir," he explained to Captain Field.



Tiny David of the State Police cracks down on a traitor, is captured by the enemy, and gets the surprise of his life.

The Black Sheep

By ROBERT R. MILL

Illustrated by Monte Crews

"HOW is business?"

Lieutenant Edward David, of the Black Horse Troop of the New York State Police, stood in the doorway of the hotel in the village of Charter, near the Canadian border, as he asked the question.

Sergeant George Edwards, who had just stepped from a troop-car now parked before the hotel, straightened abruptly as he heard the voice of the Lieutenant. He snapped to salute, then stood at attention.

Lieutenant David, known in the outfit as Tiny, failed to answer the salutation. There was no trace of the usual smile upon his broad face. And there was a note of acid in his voice as he repeated the question:

"How is business?"

Edwards flushed.

"Just what do you mean, sir?"

Tiny David seated himself on the railing. His tone was conversational:

"Only a civil question, Edwards. You have a right good stand here—close to the border, and all that. Lots of traffic is possible in lots of things, including Chinamen."

He lighted a cigarette, watching the flush upon the face of the Sergeant deepen.

"I always was interested in you, Edwards," he continued. "Thought you were a bright boy, and had what it takes to get ahead. Now I hear you have been bright enough to tie-up with Little Augie Kornfu, and I was more than interested."

He studied the end of his cigarette.

"I had a chance to hook-up with Little Augie years ago. Most of the fellows in the outfit have. We weren't bright enough to take him up on it."

There was mock interest on his face as he glanced at the Sergeant.

"Always wanted to see what a really bright guy looked like." Disappointment replaced the interest. "Guess you didn't drive a good bargain, at that. Instead of a smart guy, you look like a first-class louse to me."

The Sergeant's muscles were tense. Tiny David's voice was soft:

"Forget the lingerie-pins on my shoulders. You heard what I called you. Why don't you take a pass at me?"

Sergeant Edwards shook his head.

Tiny David sighed with regret.

"That makes it easier," was his verdict. "Hand over your gat." He accepted the revolver of the Sergeant. "Now get back to the barracks," he ordered. "Captain Field will have a few words to say to you."

Sergeant Edwards started to speak.

"Save it for the skipper," Tiny David ordered. "I am just one of the help."

The Sergeant shrugged his shoulders in resignation. He started down the steps. But at the bottom he turned.

"Shall I use the car, Lieutenant?"

Tiny David pondered.

"No," he decided, "I wouldn't do that. Better go in on the bus. You see, that is a troop-car. It is for troopers. The State doesn't furnish cars for business men."

He turned away from the Sergeant, and entered the hotel.

SERGEANT JAMES CROSBY met him in the hall.

"How did he take it, Tiny?"

"Like a lamb, or like a rat—depending on your point of view."

Crosby nodded. "I feel something like a rat myself."

"Forget it," Tiny David ordered. His voice was harsh. "He had it coming to him." He studied the face of his companion. "You are dead sure, Jim?"

"Yes," Crosby answered. "I checked, and as our friend on the radio says, I double-checked. There was only one answer."

He studied some notes.

"Last night he and Wilson were supposed to patrol near the border. But yesterday afternoon he met Little Augie and had a talk with him. Last night, when they started out, Edwards told Wilson they would work to the south of the village. That made Wilson suspicious. This morning he heard that while he and Edwards were off to the south, Little Augie coasted through with six Chinamen. Then Wilson called the barracks. He didn't want to, but he didn't want to be left holding the bag."

Tiny David assented.

"Just the way I feel about it. I think as much of this outfit as anybody else, though I don't go in for flag-waving, and honor of the troop and all that sort of guff."

His big fists were clenched.

"But it gets my goat to have a guy pull a lousy trick like that on the outfit, and think he can get away with it. I don't subscribe to that tell-teacher stuff; but in a case like this all bets are off."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, he's the skipper's baby now. Let's go in and hear some of it. You might learn some new words."

The men in barracks were unanimous in their verdict that Captain Charles Field, the commanding officer, reached a new high in the interview. It started quietly enough, with the Captain apparently seeking information.

"So you had a talk with Little Augie?"

"Yes. I don't deny it."

"What did you talk about?"

"Well—" Edwards hesitated.

"You weren't doping out when you would be eligible for old-age pensions, were you?"

The culprit made an opening.

"Everybody makes mistakes," he ventured.

"That's right," Captain Field agreed.

"My first mistake was letting you stay around here as long as you have. My second was making a sergeant out of you. Well, we will remedy that."

There was the sound of cloth tearing. It was followed by a burst of abuse and profanity.

The delighted listeners checked carefully, and when they were unable to note repetition, they nodded in mute approval. Occasionally Edwards attempted to get in a word or two of defense or explanation. Those efforts were doomed from the start.

Captain Field's vocabulary was larger. His volume was greater, his experience more vast. And he brought the performance to a close with a voucher and a ticket to Albany.

Edwards accepted the former, and calmly ignored the latter, thereby provoking an additional outburst.

"Going to stick around, eh? Well, this is bad country for ex-troopers. The climate doesn't agree with them. And for your own good I am going to help make you so sick of this neck of the woods you will be glad to get out of it—if you are able." He glared at the man before him. "Better think it over."

BUT the ticket was on the table when Edwards left the room, went to the dormitory, changed to the clothes of a civilian, and stood in the door of the living-room awaiting the arrival of a taxicab.

When the cab appeared, he attempted an airy farewell:

"So long, you fellows."

Some members of the group made a half-hearted response. Others remained silent. But Captain Field appeared on the scene just in time to get in a final acrimonious burst.

"Leave us a copy of your fingerprints," he invited. "It will save time and trouble later."

Then, as the cab pulled away, he turned to the men about him:

"From now on you fellows have just one big job: get that guy, and get him right. Every day he stays away, it shows you aren't on the job. I don't care how you do it, but I want you to get him—and get him soon."

THEY tried. Sergeant Crosby, while making a patrol near the border, came across a car driven by the erstwhile trooper in which four Chinese were riding. The chase began. It ended when the obliging driver of a gasoline truck towed the disabled troop-car to the barracks.

Crosby shook his head grimly.

"He is a shooting fool," was his verdict. "Put his first shot through my radiator. Didn't have a chance after that. And I was afraid to let him have it, because I might hit the Chinks."

Captain Field snorted.

"Can't have you out on the road," was his verdict. "You might get hurt. Try thirty days in the stables. And keep out of my sight as much as you can. You don't make me happy."

Sergeant John King had the next chance. He came to grief in almost the same way. But his regard for the safety of the Chinese in the car did not prevent him from letting fly a volley. Edwards, his passengers and his car escaped unscathed.

Sergeant King, being wise in the ways of the troop, made no report of the incident.

But the news traveled, nevertheless; the next day King joined Sergeant Crosby in the stables. Furthermore, he had orders to put in two hours of shooting-practice at the conclusion of each day's work.

It was at this time that Edwards broke into the newspapers, dubbed by the color writers as the "Will-o'-the-Wisp of the Border." The fact that he was an extrooper was gleefully cited.

"*Black Sheep Eludes Troop!*" screamed one headline.

That night the barracks were not a pleasant place. And the unpleasantness spread to the near-by village.

The following morning Sergeant Crosby appeared with a black eye.

"Ran against a door, sir," he explained to Captain Field. His commander gave



"Put them up! I have my rod right on you, and the trigger is itching!"

him a hard look, then passed on. But when Tiny David appeared, Crosby made full confession:

"I was in the restaurant, lingering over my coffee and reading the paper, when two birds blew in. They commenced to argue about what I was reading. One of them said he bet I was studying Chinese."

"Why would he study Chinese?" asked the other.

"Oh," his pal cracked, "probably he'll go to work for Little Augie as soon as he's been in the troop long enough to learn the ropes. And knowing Chinese helps to get along with the customers."

"I wouldn't take that from my brother, so I biffed him one. His pal gave me this shiner before I put him away. I don't believe either of them will go to work today."

AN hour later, after a lengthy conversation over the telephone, Captain Field summoned Crosby from the stables.

"There has been a complaint from the door you ran against," the commanding officer explained. "How long did I tell you to stay in the stables?"

"Thirty days, sir."

"You must have misunderstood me. I said sixty."

Sergeant Crosby saluted, and prepared to depart.

"And take those stripes off your sleeve," Captain Field added. "Only sergeants wear them."

Crosby departed in gloomy silence.

Sergeant Henry Linton was next to fall from grace. He stayed within range of the alien-runner's car long enough to fire twice. His first shot, going wild, struck a cow grazing along the road, making necessary the destruction of that animal. As he fired again, the car of the fugitive swerved, then straightened out and continued its flight. Later, underworld rumor told them Edwards had been hit in the left arm. Any regrets Linton might have had, vanished after his interview with Captain Field.

"That cow," Captain Field declared, consulting a paper, "must have been one of the sacred cows of India, judging by the price they ask for it. We will pay them what they ask, because I don't want any jury to laugh over the fact that when one of my men shoots at an automobile, he hits a cow. The farmer will be paid out of troop funds, and the funds will be reimbursed out of your salary, said reimbursements to be made monthly until the amount is paid in full. That makes the cow your property, and you can claim it if you want to."

He put the paper aside.

"Better turn in your gun to the property-clerk. Then you won't be tempted to try any more shooting. Besides, you won't need it in the stables. After a while there will be enough of you boys to form a club. And you ought to make that guy Edwards an honorary member."

The three lieutenants of the troop fared no better. Ordered out on roving patrols, in the blind hope they might come across the trail of the former trooper, they had only weary miles to show for their efforts.

Captain Field scoffed openly.

"Fine outfit!" was his verdict. "Let one bum drive and shoot rings around them. But you boys have your points. Nobody can beat you on excuses."

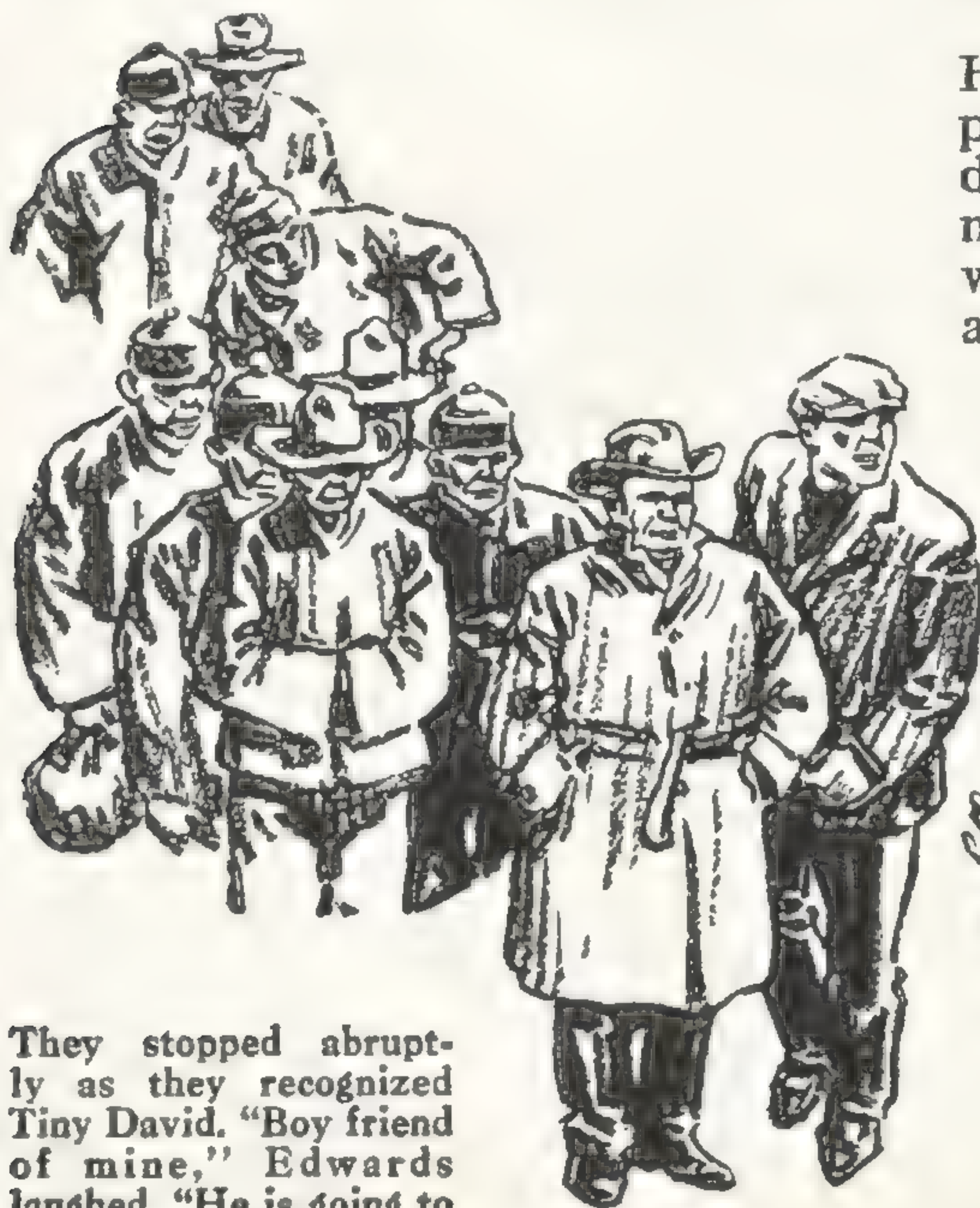
That outburst went unanswered, because, as Tiny David explained later, there didn't seem to be any answer. And before departing for the day, Captain Field fired another shot:

"Lock everything carefully," he ordered Max Payton, the top-sergeant. "That guy Edwards might break in here during the night and steal something."

They derived some slight satisfaction the following day from the report that the United States Immigration Border Patrol had been worsted in a clash with the fugitive. Edwards, however, had not won a complete victory, for he and his cargo had been driven back to Canada.

"That's the break!" Captain Field declared. "He will come through tonight. Bottle every road." He swung into action. All available reserves were sent out. Crosby, King and Linton won reprieves from the stables, and joined the patrols, the latter reclaiming his revolver from the property-clerk, while Captain Field was so busy he forgot to issue any facetious warning.

Tiny David remained in the barracks. He had been ordered to head a roving patrol, which would go into action at dusk, covering the entire territory, and making sure that every stationary patrol was on the job and vigilant. But shortly after lunch Max Payton called out:



They stopped abruptly as they recognized Tiny David. "Boy friend of mine," Edwards laughed. "He is going to play nice."



"Telephone, Lieutenant."

Tiny David picked up the instrument.

"Lieutenant David speaking."

"Say,"—the voice obviously was disguised,—"you don't know me, but I am giving you a tip. You know Frenchman's Island?"

"Yes."

"Edwards will be there at midnight tonight with a load of Chinks. The Canadian bulls are closing in on him, and he is wise that you have things blocked, so he is going to use that as a hide-out until it is safe to go through."

Tiny David thought rapidly. Frenchman's Island, situated near the American shore of the St. Lawrence, was uninhabited. It would make an ideal hide-out. There was something vaguely familiar about the voice, but he was unable to identify it. He made an attempt to prolong the conversation.

"Why did you call me?"

A low laugh carried over the wires.

"You aint the worst guy in the world. I did a bit in stir once. When I was sprung, you could have picked on me. You gave me a hand instead. Chalk this up on account."

"Thanks," said Tiny David. Vague memories were stirring in his mind. There had been a man—

"And another thing," continued the muffled voice. "Wait until after dark to cross over to the island. Edwards can watch it from where he is hiding out now. And go alone. He is going to get wise if you start moving an army over. Besides, that guy was in your outfit once. He has friends. And there might be leaks. Get there early and wait for him. It will be a cinch."

"Thanks again," said Tiny David. "Look me up sometime."

HE turned from the telephone, sat down at his desk, and thought rapidly. There was an even chance that the tip was a ruse, designed to get him out of the way. He discounted that possibility when he recalled the informant had declared Edwards knew the patrols were out. He would not bother to dispose of one particular trooper.

Prudence prompted him to consult Captain Field. The knowledge that the commanding officer would order him to take men with him acted as a deterrent. The unidentified caller had been right. It would be hard enough for one man to cross to the island unobserved. Edwards had been a member of the outfit,

and many of the men had been fond of him, for he was a likable chap. Much as Tiny David hated to admit it, even to himself, there had been something uncanny about the way the alien-runner had been able to slip out of the traps prepared for him. The lips of the man at the desk tightened. There would be no slip-up this time.

Crosby and Linton were scheduled to accompany him on the roving patrol. He trusted them both implicitly. But if they knew what was happening, they would insist upon accompanying him to the island. That would jeopardize the success of the venture.

Tiny David made a quick decision. He would accompany Crosby and Linton, according to the original plan. He would route the patrol near Frenchman's Island. There he would make some excuse, leave his companions, and get on the island unobserved. Later, if all went well, he would rejoin his companions, and allow them to share in the credit resulting from the capture. If nothing happened, he would rejoin them, with nobody the wiser.

SHORTLY before dusk the car pulled out of the garage. Crosby was at the wheel. Linton sat in the rear. Tiny David seated himself beside the driver.

"Hope you won't mind a slight odor of horse," Linton apologized. "This is the first airing we have had for three weeks."

Tiny David grinned.

"If your uncle has any luck tonight, he may get you boys out of the stables. Drive toward Hopburg, Jim. And take it easy. We don't want to get there too soon."

Linton leaned forward eagerly.

"Planning something, Tiny?"

"Sort of," Tiny David admitted.

Crosby heaved a gloomy sigh.

"If it is just the same to you, Tiny, you can skip it. I am due out in thirty-nine days. I know those plans of yours. If this one works like some of the others, it will be sixty-nine days. And I'll have an ex-lieutenant keeping me company."

Tiny David lapsed into an injured silence. There was more than a grain of truth in Crosby's assertion. If anything did go wrong, there would be no alibi. He had failed to notify his superior officer of his plans. He did not intend to take his men into his confidence. A slip-up, bad enough under any conditions, might in this case be accompanied by ugly suspicion.



The ex-trooper walked to the beach, flooded by moonlight, and began to trace a map in the sand. "Here we are." He made a mark. "Where are Joe and Steve?"

For just a moment he decided to change his plans. Then he realized it was too late. He gritted his teeth, and determined to go through with it.

IT was dark when the car reached Hopburg. In the outskirts, near the bank of the St. Lawrence, Tiny David ordered Crosby to halt, and stepped from the car.

"I am leaving you fellows here," he said. "Cruise around over the territory. Drop back about one, and pick me up. And if anybody should ask you where I am, you don't know."

Crosby studied his face.

"Hasn't she got a friend, Tiny?"

Linton leaned forward hopefully.

"Maybe she has two friends," he suggested.

Tiny David shook his head.

"You fellows make me go official on you, so all right. You have had your orders. Do you understand them?"

"Yes sir," came the chorus.

The car drove off.

Tiny David made his way to the shore, found a boat, and calmly appropriated it. He was on a line with, and west of the island when he stopped rowing. The current carried the boat toward the south shore of the island. A couple of pulls on an oar brought it to shore.

The State police officer stepped out, pulled the boat up on the land, and hid it in the foliage. Then, walking slowly and quietly, he made his way across the island. Soon he was near the north shore. There, picking a spot shielded by leaves, but from which he could command a view of the Canadian shore of the river, he sat down.

There was no noise on the island. From the river, which was transformed into molten silver by the moonlight, there came a rippling, soothing murmur.

"Nice night for it," was Tiny David's comment.

His right hand, from force of habit, swung to his left side, found the butt of his revolver, and tested to determine if the weapon would slide easily from the holster. Satisfied, he pulled out his flashlight, and placed it on the ground near his hand. Then he relaxed and sat for a time listening to the river's murmur.

His thoughts unconsciously strayed to the man he hoped to trap. There had been nothing to stamp Edwards as a black sheep when he first joined the troop. His letters of recommendation had been excellent. He had passed both mental and physical examinations with high ratings.

"Likely youngster," had been the verdict of Captain Field, upon his arrival.



For a time, everything seemed to verify that verdict. Edwards learned rapidly. He was a crack shot. He rode a horse like a Cossack. Behind the wheel of a car, he asked no odds of any man.

He did his first tour of duty under Sergeant Crosby.

"Good man," had been the terse comment of that task-master.

Tiny David himself had a hand in getting Edwards his sergeancy. He had deserved it, but it had been a toss-up between him and another man. Tiny David's voice had swung the decision to Edwards. And he had distinguished himself—there had been two brilliant arrests. Then disgrace, dishonorable discharge—and now the life of an outlaw.

THE man sitting among the branches shook his head slowly. There was only one explanation—easy money. During the flush bootleg days that same bait had been dangled before the eyes of almost every member of the troop, and almost without exception, they had scorned it. Though they would have been the first to deride any such sentimentality, the men of the Black Horse Troop prided themselves that they had come through that dangerous ordeal with clean colors.

Now, with the greater temptation removed, there was a stain upon the es-

cutcheon of the troop. It had been placed there by a man who could have done much to add to the laurels of the organization. Tiny David secretly liked that man. But the outfit came first. Its colors were stained. There was only one way to remove that stain. He must get Edwards—get him tonight; and his own liking for the man must play no part in what was to happen.

He stood up, used his hands to protect his eyes from the rays of the moon, and gazed at the Canadian shore. A small point of light was flickering there. He moved forward to the shore, halting in the very fringe of foliage, and stiffened like a pointer.

The light flashed again. Tiny David leaned forward. A branch snapped behind him. He attempted to wheel about, but he was off balance. The flashing progress of his right hand toward his revolver was halted by a pressure in his back and a grim command:

"Put them up! I have my rod right on you, and the trigger is itching, so don't try any movie stuff."

The voice brought chagrin and fear. Tiny raised his hands.

"All right, Edwards," he said. "You take the first trick. But you can't win."

"No?" Edwards laughed easily. "Well, things are breaking good this far."

His left hand found Tiny David's gun, unfastened the lanyard, and removed the weapon, which was placed in a pocket. He worked carefully, giving the trooper no chance to overpower him.

Tiny David found grim irony in the fact that he had taught Edwards that method of disarming a prisoner. His captor must have shared the thought, for he murmured:

"Comes in handy, doesn't it?"

The hand came forward again, found Tiny David's whistle, and snapped it from the chain.

"We won't need any music," Edwards explained.

The third movement of the exploring hand found the trooper's blackjack in a rear pocket and removed it. Edwards weighed it in his hand.

"Nice persuader," he declared, "but I am not open to persuasion—tonight. Pick up that flashlight and toss it to me."

Tiny David obeyed. A dozen conflicting thoughts were flashing through his mind.

"So you are my ex-convict friend," he murmured. "I thought there was something about the voice."

"Marvelous, Watson!" taunted Edwards. "Yes, we happened to need you in our business, so we invited you over. Nice of you to drop in." He studied his prisoner. "Now that you are here, be the perfect guest. Give up the idea that you are going to get your hands on this gun. There aren't going to be any third-act rescues."

Tiny David relaxed, recognizing defeat.

"That's sensible," Edwards approved. "The night is young. You are going to meet a lot of interesting people. We will try to keep you amused."

HE stepped out from the foliage, and pressed the button of his flashlight twice. Two answering gleams of light came from the Canadian shore.

"I believe you have met Little Augie Kornfu before," Edwards said. "But never under quite these circumstances."

There was the sound of muffled oars, and soon a broad barge came to a grating stop on the sand of the beach. Little Augie Kornfu and one of his lieutenants, known as Larry the Fox, stepped out, and proceeded to herd ten solemn-faced Chinese ashore. They stopped abruptly as they recognized Tiny David.

"What the—" began Little Augie.

Edwards laughed aloud.

"Boy friend of mine," he explained. "He is going to play nice. If he doesn't, it is going to be just too bad—for him. To start off, he is going to tell us just where his patrols are stationed."

Tiny David looked his captor full in the face.

"I'll see you in hell first!" he cried.

"Shut up!" The stern command was emphasized by a menacing gesture of the hand that held the revolver. "You speak when you are spoken to."

Tiny David leaned against the trunk of a tree, his muscles tense. Little Augie and Larry the Fox stood about uncertainly. But the ex-trooper was in full command of the situation.

"Let's get organized." He walked to the beach, flooded by moonlight, picked up a stick, and began to trace a crude map of the district in the sand. "Here we are." He made a mark in the sand. Then he turned to Little Augie and Larry. "Where are Joe and Steve? And what do they have?"

Little Augie hesitated.

"Snap out of it," Edwards commanded. "This bird is going to stay right with us. If we should leave him, he won't be able to talk."

Little Augie nodded slowly. Apparently he was not fully convinced, but he responded to the note of command in the voice of the ex-trooper.

"Joe and Steve are in the farmhouse near Charter. They have fifteen Chinks. They are waiting for word from us before they roll."

Edwards made another mark on the map. "That's fine," he declared. "That clears up everything. Now we can get to work."

Unconsciously, Little Augie and Larry the Fox glanced at Tiny David, who in turn watched Edwards. And the State police lieutenant could hardly believe his eyes when he saw the revolver, which had been pointed at his breast, trained upon the two alien-runners.

"Stick them up, you two rats!" roared Edwards. "Make it snappy, because I just want half an excuse to drill you!"

The two men gasped their amazement; then, awed by the tone and manner of the man before them, slowly obeyed the command. Tiny David, equally at a loss, felt his own revolver thrust into his hands, and heard a terse command:

"Cover them, Tiny, while I give them a frisk. And shoot if they look cross-eyed."

The quick, expert search produced a number of weapons, all of which Edwards calmly appropriated. He stepped back beside Tiny David.

"I am all through as your man Friday," he told Little Augie. "Allow me to present myself." He bowed mockingly. "Special Agent George Peterson, of the Department of Justice."

LITTLE AUGIE swore vehemently—oaths directed at the Government agent and the trooper indiscriminately.

"Save them all for me, dearie," the agent advised. "The troopers weren't in on this. You, Augie, got so noisy that the immigration people were fed up on you, and appealed to my chief. I was sent as the answer to their prayer."

He turned to Tiny David.

"I was planted on your outfit in the regular way. I soon learned that you fellows were on the level, but I had orders to play it alone. When Augie propositioned me, I pretended to fall. I did it so clumsily that you couldn't help getting wise. That made me eligible for Augie's second proposition, and it soon came." He chuckled. "He had room for an ex-trooper in his outfit. And I surely was a help to him—for a while."

"But tonight is the pay-off, Tiny. I needed you here. There was no chance for explanations, because when I made that telephone call, I knew the men around me wouldn't let me live very long if they thought I was doing anything except bait a trap for you."

He paused, and lighted a cigarette to cover his embarrassment.

"What happened after you got here, Tiny, was strictly my own idea. In the first place, I wasn't sure you would believe the explanation without positive proof, and I haven't a single bit of identification with me. Then, even if you did agree to play along, I wasn't sure you would play the part well enough to fool Augie. And we needed some dope from him."

A slow smile played over his face.

"Besides, I owed you a bad half-hour. Darn your hide, Tiny, you certainly didn't pull the punches when you turned me in."

DARKNESS hid the flush on Tiny David's face. His voice was gruff.

"That was because I had you near the top of my list, and it cut me up to think you had gone sour on us. All the gang felt that way. Maybe they won't be tickled when they learn the low-down on this!"

Peterson laughed with relief.

"That's swell," he declared. "I surely will be glad to step out of the black-sheep classification. It hurt, particularly since I like every mother's son in the outfit. Well, that's that."

He sent the rays of the flashlight across the face of his watch.

"Right now the Canadian police are very busy. They are cleaning up all of Little Augie's unfinished business on the Canadian side, from Montreal on down. They won't have any trouble finding it, because I gave them a complete list of names and addresses."

"We will try to do the same thing on this side of the line. We have a good slice of it here. But we mustn't forget Joe and Steve in the farmhouse in Charter. They are waiting for word to roll. We will deliver it to them in person." He chuckled. "They should appreciate that."

His glance swept over the two alien-runners and the stolid Chinese.

"Meanwhile, we have this assorted junk on our hands. Where can we park it, Tiny?" He grinned. "You don't, by

any chance, have any of the outfit within calling distance, do you?"

Tiny David's grin matched his. He spoke with his characteristic drawl.

"What are chances of getting back my whistle?"

Peterson handed it over. Tiny David's grin was broader.

"Crosby and Linton had orders to wait for me on the main road. But something tells me that right about now they have put two and two together, and that they are either on their way to this island, or all ready to start at the first sign of trouble. That was why I told you that you couldn't win. Well, we will soon see."

He pointed his gun aloft and fired twice into the air. He followed it with two blasts upon the whistle. Almost at once, from the American shore of the river, came two answering shots and two like blasts upon a whistle. There was a splashing sound, as a boat was thrown into the water. Then came the noise of frantic rowing.

They stood together on the beach of the island, straining forward to peer through the darkness, and listening to the noisy progress of the boat rushing toward them. Through the clear night air it was very easy to hear the labored breathing of the two men as they used every ounce of their energy to race toward their comrade and unknown danger.

The two men on the shore of the island were silent. But little lumps were forming in their throats. The ex-Sergeant was the first to speak.

"It is just like coming home," he murmured.

FROM out on the river there came a frantic cry:

"Tiny! Are you all right, Tiny?"

Tiny David stepped out into the moonlight.

"Take it easy, stable-hands!" he called.

The sound of rowing ceased abruptly. A match flared as one of the men in the boat lighted a cigarette. The voice of Sergeant Crosby, heavy with disgust and sarcasm, floated across the water:

"Hell! The loafer has been sitting around in the moonlight, and now he wants us to row him back. What do you say we leave him there, Linny, and get back to the horses?"

Then the tone of the voice changed:

"Yes, Lieutenant. We are coming."

Another adventure of Tiny David and the State Police will be described in an early issue.

HAWK of the



The extraordinary story of a white boy brought up among primitive men and savage beasts, in the strange and hitherto undiscovered land whence perhaps came the American Indians.

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

The Story So Far:

THE disappearance of the schooner *Cherokee*,—last spoken by a whaler in Bering Sea—occasioned no great comment at the time; but had her fate been known, headlines would have flamed across every newspaper in the world.

The *Cherokee* was no ordinary vessel, for her owner and navigator, Doctor Lincoln Rand, had equipped her as a kind of floating infirmary in which he hoped to accomplish for the natives of the north Pacific coasts something of what another knight of medicine has done in Labrador on the Atlantic side. With him were his young wife Helena, and his educated Indian aid and friend Mokuyi.

A succession of storms drove the ship off her course, apparently northward. Finally she grounded on a strange and savage coast, an oasis of the Arctic somewhere north of Siberia, Rand concluded, somehow warmed by unknown ocean currents and by the fires of a great volcanic region that flamed beyond the horizon—a land thickly wooded, and supporting many and varied wild animals.

Almost immediately upon landing, Rand and Helena and Mokuyi were be-

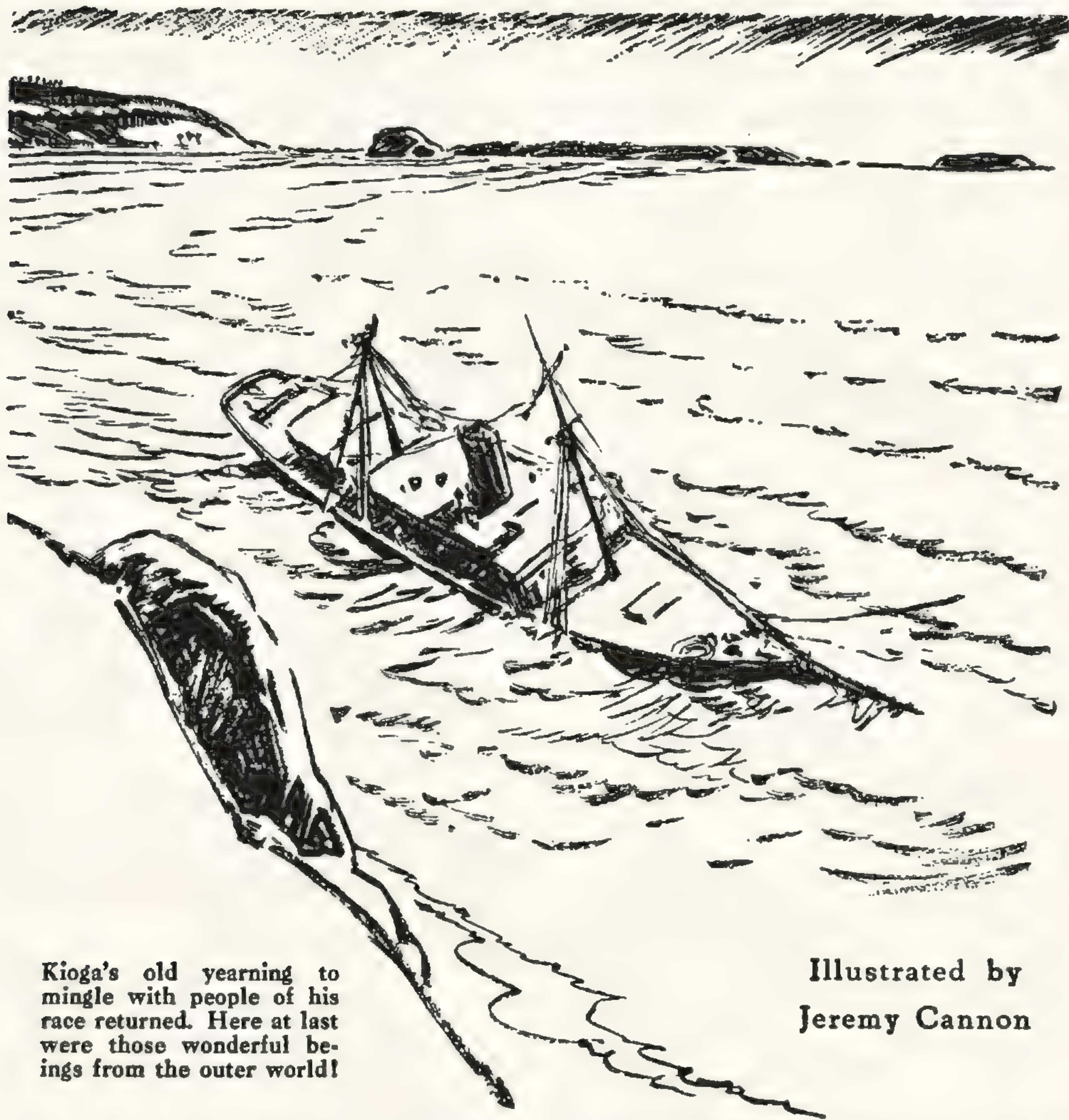
set by painted savages, and would have been killed had not Mokuyi addressed them in his native tongue. *And they understood him!* For these people were of the same stock as the American Indian, though they had never heard of the outside world. Here was the birthplace of the Indian race, whence our First Americans came in prehistoric times.

A few months the newcomers lived among these primitive people; and here Helena's baby was born.

But only six weeks afterward tragedy wrote an end. Native enemies from the plains to the north raided the village; and both Rand and Helena were killed before the attack was beaten off. Thereupon Mokuyi adopted the little white boy as his own; Mokuyi's native wife Awena cared for him; and later Mokuyi himself taught the boy to speak and to read the English of his fathers.

Kioga, he was named—the Snow Hawk. And the boy thrived amazingly in his early years. The bears and one mountain lion were his friends and allies; and in comradeship with these and other wilderness friends, he grew to powerful manhood.

WILDERNESS



Kioga's old yearning to mingle with people of his race returned. Here at last were those wonderful beings from the outer world!

Illustrated by
Jeremy Cannon

And then, visiting the shore one day, he saw the hulk of a vessel pounding to pieces on the reef. Swimming out, Kioga boarded the wreck, and explored it—and bore away in triumph a steel knife or two, a chest of treasure and an armful of books over which he pored many an hour, renewing his knowledge of English.

Just in time, perhaps; for presently his last link with the outer world was broken when his foster-parents Mokuyi and Awena were murdered by Yellow Weasel, the head of the Long-Knife secret society, who sought to usurp the power of Mokuyi's friend and protector the chief Sawamic. Indeed the evil-hearted shaman pursued the fleeing Snow Hawk also, and would have killed him. But it

was Yellow Weasel who perished under Kioga's knife; and thereafter Kioga fought a savage blood-feud with Yellow Weasel's clan, and killed many of them.

Indeed his prowess in war led to his selection as chief of the tribe after the death of old Sawamic; and he directed their successful defense against a deadly attack by the plains people from farther north. . . . Shortly after this, from the cliffs along the shore Kioga caught sight of a yacht stranded below him; on her decks were the figures of white people! (*The story continues in detail:*)

IN a flash all Kioga's old yearning to mingle with people of his race returned, multiplied by having been partly

forgotten in the excitement of other events. Here at last were those wonderful beings from the outer world! But a peculiar tableau upon the ship's deck checked his enthusiasm.

The scene reminded him of a stag he had once seen brought to bay by wolves. The stag in this case was a tall man of handsome face and stalwart figure, who stood at an entrance to the ship's deck-house. The wolves, even to the expression of savagery upon their faces, were epitomized by a group of men astern, lurking behind a rough barricade. Every pack has its leader. Theirs appeared to be a leering ruffian garbed in the filthy rags of a careless seaman, who faced the clean-cut white man at about ten paces. The answer to the seaman's bold front, as with all who run in packs, lay in the superior weight of numbers behind him.

FROM the yacht *Alberta's* log comes the story of happenings up to this hour: Built in the States as a sea-going pleasure-craft, she had later been equipped by her rich young American owner for a cruise in North Pacific waters about the Aleutians, where he proposed to collect, for an American museum, numerous specimens of the animals known to inhabit the islands about Alaska. On board when she left port were her crew; her owner, Captain Allan Kendle; his fiancée Beth La Salle, of an old American pioneer family; and her brother Daniel, two years her senior.

Arrangements had been made for the ship to proceed to Nome, pick up Beth's father, who had mining interests in Alaska, and return to the Aleutians for the shooting. The elder La Salle, as Kendle knew, had been cool to the idea of Beth's marriage to a son of wealth—an idler, as he had said, with nothing to recommend him but his fortune. Out of that challenge the idea of this expedition had been born. At the very least, the somewhat dangerous plans to be executed during the voyage would enable him to prove that he stood on a par with Beth's own adventurous forbears, much of whose spirit had passed down intact to her and to Dan.

But discordant events were to jangle Kendle's anticipated happiness. Well out to sea, a small sailing craft was sighted, flying a distress-signal. Approaching, they saw an unnavigable, hurricane-torn hulk which was the sport of every passing sea. The men on board proved to be little more than bags of skin and bones,

who fought like animals over the provisions which Kendle and young La Salle took over. Other frightful conditions on the vessel convinced Kendle that the men he must rescue were indeed worse than wolves. Some, perhaps all, had kept alive by partaking of the flesh of their dead fellows.

In point of fact these unkempt creatures, rescued ironically in the name of humanity, were members of that dread race of piratical cut-stomachs who perpetuate the human slave and narcotic traffic, carrying on their vicious trade along the Asiatic coast to this day, despite the ships of war of the great powers. Their vessel appeared once to have been a schooner, perhaps of British construction. But she was now rigged after the manner of a Chinese junk, and had been equipped with matting sails, long since ripped to shreds. Further altered by the addition of a high stern, ornately decorated with a fantastic Phoenix in dirty yellow-green colors, she looked an ill-omened hybrid harridan of the seas from which naught but uncleanness could come and which, in the end, even the impartial deeps would accept with misgivings. Indeed, that craft could have told crueler tales than those which leaped to mind at sight of iron collars affixed by chains to staples in her hold-timbers, and long rows of blackened manacles strung from her beams.

It was with grave anxiety, rooted in consideration for Beth La Salle's safety, that Kendle weighed matters in his mind. Moved by pity, however, he finally took the men aboard his yacht, intending to transfer them to the first eastbound ship that should come along. No vessel appeared, however. Irrked by the delay and unwilling to stand by any longer, Captain Kendle finally gave the order to steam ahead, making the best of the polyglot company thrust upon him.

IN the original building as in the present operation of the *Alberta*, expense had been no consideration. Her crew was well-paid, loyal and self-disciplined. Space was everywhere ample, far beyond the needs of this expedition. Allan Kendle's guests had been installed aft in the so-called "owner's quarters," which were equipped with beds, baths and wardrobes, flanked by extra unused state-rooms and connected by stairway to the deck-saloon. Here all were wont to gather and listen to radio broadcasts received through a modern receiver. In

the deck-saloon, also, was the rather old spark-transmitter which had come with the ship, and which only awaited the return of the *Alberta* to her home port to be replaced by more modern sending apparatus.

But this old set was a source of fascination to Dan, who soon struck up a friendship with the electrician and radio-man in order to indulge a natural aptitude for amateur radio-work, which he had always enjoyed at home.

Kendle himself occupied the captain's room and study aft of the wheel-house. Officers and men were berthed below, forward of a double guest stateroom, which had been converted into a dining-saloon, accessible to galley and fore-castle. An inside passageway ran fore and aft the full length of the vessel.

AFTER consultation with his chief officer, Kendle deemed it wisest to transfer Beth and her brother forward to the double stateroom, and quarter the rescued men temporarily astern, where a watchful eye could be kept upon them. And this he did, providing them with a generous supply of tinned provisions and water.

Such an arrangement, however, nourished not only the bodies of the men but also their innate lawless cupidity. Trouble was quickly brewing in the luxurious staterooms aft, under cover of a disarming quiet. Two nights later mutiny reared its head. With a dispatch arguing previous experience in similar situations, the foreigners rushed the *Alberta's* crew without warning. In the short and bloody scrimmage Kendle's radio-man was fatally stabbed defending his apparatus, which the mutineers then proceeded to wreck.

Though repulsed in their carefully planned attempt to seize the vessel, the attackers succeeded in a part of their plans. They fouled the ship's propellers with chains, and seized two of the high-powered hunting-rifles which Kendle had brought along for shooting big game. They also stole a quantity of reserve provisions—a grave loss to the party. At last they threw up a rude barricade astern and defied Kendle's authority to bring them to terms.

Outnumbered now, and faced with a dangerous crisis, Kendle ordered the passageway leading aft blocked off. All movable furniture was piled against the locked steel doors, in order to prevent any surprise ingress by the mutineers.

When these precautions had been taken, the *Alberta* was literally a ship divided—like some great beehive with its cells walled up between the opposing factions. The deck amidships, to either side of the deck-house, was a kind of No Man's Land; aft was the pirate barricade; forward, several spare bottom plates had been pressed into service as shields for Kendle's posted guards.

That night, after a brief funeral service, the gloomy-eyed crew saw the black sea close over the bodies of their two murdered companions.

Recording these events in the log, Kendle heard steps in the passage and looked up to see one of his older hands standing at the door of the pilot-house, cap in fist.

"Come in, Jason," Kendle welcomed him, greeting him by his first name. "What's on your mind?"

"Beggin' your pardon, Cap'n, but the men have been a-talkin' things over, so they have, sir. Two or three of us could slip aft tonight and clean out them yellow rats. We're ready for orders, sir."

Kendle neither smiled nor changed face. But his quiet words were more than gratifying to this old and trusted salt.

"Thank you all, Jason. I won't forget this. But go back to the fore-castle and tell them this for me: Two of our men were killed last night. I know their families and children—and yours. And I'll have no more life lost on this ship!

"Those cutthroats aft have two rifles. They'll soon find the ammunition-boxes locked in the lazaretto. We'll wait a bit longer. No man is to expose himself. Those are orders! Understand?"

"Aye-aye, sir!" answered the seaman, wringing the hand that was extended him. Then he left the wheelhouse.

So the *Alberta* stood by, and matters remained in a state of suspension.

ONE misfortune after another overtook the drifting ship in the following days. Storm and fog harried her off the beaten ocean lanes, and into ice-filled seas farther north. Kendle remained adamant in his decision to sacrifice no man of his crew. And the pirates played a waiting game.

But in the end, with supplies dwindling, water running low and Dan La Salle begging to be allowed to crawl back and stir up that vipers' nest with a pistol, Kendle gave in. It was determined that three men chosen by lot, should be

armed and slip astern at midnight, in an attempt to catch the pirates unawares. The drawing was being held near the crew's hatch, abaft the anchor-winch.

Beth, up from her stateroom for a breath of sea air, was praying that Dan would not be one of those to go. Suddenly, out of the foggy darkness above the sea there came to her ears a sound which she mistook for the approach of another vessel. Her call brought Kendle and Dan running. For a moment Kendle listened, then shouted orders to his men.

"Shoals to starboard! Man the winch!" Swift shadows leaped to obey, awaiting his next command. "Drop anchor!" The roar of chain through hawse-pipe drowned the splash of the great hook, as the links paid out. But the anchor did not hold, and the ship continued to drift straight into that mounting thunder.

Thus the *Alberta* appears to have been drawn toward the shoals of Nato'wa by the same currents which had carried so many other hulks there,—currents as unknown to Kendle as to those who had preceded him by more than twenty years.

Faced by almost certain shipwreck, Kendle himself ran back to within a few yards of the pirate barricade, calling for a truce and warning them of the impending danger.

A savage laugh mocked him, and a hurled wrench crashed through a window of the deck-saloon a foot from his shoulder.

Then came the frightful experience of passing blindly through the wave-washed ridges, all efforts at self-salvation nullified by the menace of that murderous band astern. With the propellers crippled, steerageway was impossible: without steerageway, no ship will answer the helm. To save the chain, the dragging anchor was hauled up. Life-belts were passed out all around, for it seemed that the *Alberta* could never live through the repeated broadside smashes she took from the huge seas.

WITH every sickening roll her furnishings could be heard banging about. Shrouding her decks were the dense winding-sheet mists of Nato'wa twining about and hanging upon her like impalpable strangling tentacles. Now and again came the scream of tearing steel as some jagged rock attacked the double bottom, or the groan of straining partitions as she heaved, like a goaded animal,

away from a blow upon her trembling flank. . . .

The grace of God, nothing else, brought the *Alberta* to haven at gray mid-afternoon of the third day, a haggard shell of her former gleaming beauty. But how—or where—Kendle did not know. Frowning cliffs leaned over the sheltered bay in which she came to rest, and when a sailor heaved the lead and called the astonishing depth, it was fifteen fathoms, ninety feet, ten times the draft of the ship.

Soon thereafter a white rag waved over the stern. The leader of the mongrel band, one Manuel Salerno, stood forth and spoke.

The Americans, it seemed, were in doubt of their position, and their means of communicating with civilization were destroyed. He, Manuel Salerno, had no such doubts. In consideration of the Americans surrendering their arms, he would navigate the ship to a civilized port. Otherwise they might momentarily expect to be fallen upon and slaughtered by Salerno's confederates, whom he held back with growing difficulty.

Moreover, intimated the man, four vessels similar to the pirates' own habitually cruised these waters. It could only be a matter of time until they sighted the disabled *Alberta*. Then it would be a great advantage to have Manuel Salerno for a friend.

THIS was the scene upon which Kioga had come in time to overhear a part of this ultimatum, delivered in the foulest conceivable English.

For a moment the man's very insolence impressed Kendle. Then his eye chanced to fall upon the mutineers waiting in the background. It suddenly appeared to him that their attitudes were tenser than was to be expected of men holding the upper hand. In a flash he saw through it all. The ammunition supply in the lazaretto had not been discovered. Salerno's threat was a clumsy attempt to play upon his credulity.

"Very well," came his answer, clipped and precise. "You know what island this is. I'll put you ashore with your men. You'll get along well enough until one of your fleet picks you up."

Salerno went pale as he translated Kendle's offer in the bastard tongue of his confederates. The faces of his men mirrored but one single emotion as a storm of protest howled about his head. One, with drawn knife, would have

stabbed him through, had not several of the others restrained him by force.

Kendle knew he had made a home shot. These men knew no more of this land than did he. Their bluff had been called. Salerno had bungled the parley and exposed their weakness.

Turning back to Kendle, sullen and crestfallen, his next sentence informed the Captain how thoroughly he had been duped into thinking the pirates dangerously armed.

"You give us food and bullets, eh?"

"No," replied Kendle calmly, knowing full well that to agree would be a worse folly than his original tolerance of them. "All the food you will need—but not a cartridge."

EXASPERATED at the trap his own guile had led him into, Salerno forgot himself. Anger stained his face and neck deeply.

"*Dios*, no! We no accep'!" he screamed in the arrogance of despair. "Leave us here unarm'? No, goddam!" He was advancing a step upon the other man, working himself into a fury which he now vented in unprintable epithets, ending, "No! You are outnumber' by my men, and—"

But Kendle paid no heed to what followed. His hand had gone to the butt of his revolver. It would be wisest to shoot this insolent fellow and have done with him, a more than justifiable act under the conditions. Yet he let the rare opportunity slip by, and contented himself with cutting Salerno's threats short with sharp words of his own.

"You want bullets, you men? You'll get them—hot out of our rifles! Now stand back, before I blow your damned head off!"

Cowed by the sudden blaze in Kendle's eyes, Salerno stood back and rejoined his men, among whom he was in greater disrepute than ever.

Entering the threshold of the deck-house, Kendle came face to face with Beth and Dan, who stood just behind her. The resemblance between them was startling. About twenty-two years old, tall and of good frame, La Salle had in his clear blue eye some of the animated sparkle which enlivened Beth's. Though impulsive, outspoken and quick-tempered, he made up for it in his swift grin and readiness to share the unaccustomed labors and present hardships of the crew.

Two years Dan's inferior in years, remarkable strength resided in Beth's lithe body. Her brother's own boast that she could outswim him in a long heat was no idle one. Kendle himself, while riding at her side, had once seen her subdue a vicious and refractory horse with a hand of iron and heels that knew what spurs were for. Like Dan, she was willful and headstrong at times; and though less ready with her smile, its occasional appearance redoubled her beauty.



For Beth La Salle, the last veil of uncertainty as to her fate was torn aside. . . . Mendez approached her; with a qualm of nausea, Beth felt his hand close upon her arm.

But she was serious now, and composed, though she had witnessed all that transpired.

"Too bad you didn't shoot him," were Dan's first words. "Fair play will never work with his kind."

Astonished to meet with even this mild criticism where he had expected fullest approval, Kendle replied: "I couldn't shoot the man in cold blood."

"I would've!" snorted the other, sending an uneasy glance toward Beth, in recollection of what they had seen on the pirate ship. "If that gang ever breaks loose, armed or unarmed, you'll pay for coddling them, take it from me!"

KENDLE concealed his annoyance. His answer was mildly rebuking.

"Wherever we are, Dan, this ship is still a part of American soil, an outpost of the Union, if you want to call it that, and—"

"Hang civilization!" retorted the younger man, ruthlessly realistic and out of patience with Kendle altogether. "What do they know or care about America or its laws?"

As between the two, Beth's sympathies were all with Kendle, whose restraint had already raised him immeasurably high in her esteem. Fearing that Dan's words had hurt him, she softened them in her own way.

"I'll answer that, Dan, in one word—nothing. But life once taken, can't be given back. You couldn't have done any differently yourself. And it's easy to criticize." Her interruption was well-timed, and Dan calmed. In the generous way natural to him, he managed a grin at Kendle; and out of a genuine liking between them, the smile was returned.

"You're right, Beth. Sorry, Cap'n. I spoke out of turn." With a half-apologetic glance at the girl, he joined the men behind the barricade.

Beth turned to Kendle. "He means it, Allan. And I'm sorry he said what he did. But he was right—if only in part. We're not through with Salerno, I'm afraid."

Kendle chose to misunderstand her. His little remaining irritation fathered his next remark.

"Wouldn't it be better to stay below? The sight of you only makes things worse than they were before."

The words were quickly out of his mouth, and as quickly regretted. He realized that if she felt any fear,—which he doubted,—it was more for himself,

Dan and the crew, than on her own account. But Beth understood what he meant—the leering men of Salerno's group had looked upon her with something more than passing interest, right from the beginning. She threw back her head, giving expression to the careless fiery spirit which twenty years of rigorous training and education had never altogether stamped out of her. Then she laughed, and Kendle accorded her a grudging admiration.

"I'll overlook that, Allan, if you'll forget what Dan said."

Her tone removed the sting from anything that had passed. Her hand on his arm was a definite mark of favor. Indeed, she liked him better in that moment than ever before, for he was himself again, genial, cool and admirable. She felt an impulse to say a little more, and did. "Grandmother made bullets and shot a gun like a man. Dan's a little headstrong, and so am I. We inherit it. But I—we'll both try, to make amends." The words contained a little of apology and the desire to be agreeable, and a definite affection besides, at which Kendle's features softened in response.

"Is that a promise?" he began with shining eyes, but at his eager question she only gave a little laugh, then escaped to her quarters.

Though Kendle had regretted his own lenity with Salerno, politic or not, it had won Beth's approval as no summary act of violence could have done. Impressed as he was by the stark realism of Dan's words, all of which had been completely in agreement with his own sentiments, the native stubbornness aroused by opposition quickly reasserted itself, strengthening him in the belief that he had acted in the best interests of all, Beth included. His eyes followed her until she had disappeared.

OTHER eyes, much closer now, also admired; for to Kioga, this beautiful white girl with vibrant laughter was strangely stirring. During the course of events he had moved ever nearer, the better to overhear snatches of what was being said, and to appraise at close range the strange mixture of Oriental half-castes and more-or-less-white cut-throats who comprised Salerno's followers.

He wished now that he were better armed. The thin lash was useless, except for close work, though dangerous then. He regretted that well-filled quiver

in his lodge at far-away Hopeka. But this was no time for vain regrets. Concealed upon a ledge, with one of his two arrows fitted to his bow, he had been prepared to kill the first man to make a treacherous move during the parley. For a time the possibility of treachery existed, born of Salerno's blazing anger and frustration. But at sight of the girl behind Kendle, the pirate's contorted features had acquired an expression of cunning calculation, which he instantly masked as he joined his men astern.

Hawk lowered his ready shaft and continued watchful.

CHAPTER XXIV

CAPTIVE AND CAPTOR

THE crew were now struggling to get ropes and hawse ashore, but it was soon clear that they dealt with a situation unparalleled in their experience. The drop of the water-level was plainly perceptible and left the cliffs wet and gleaming. When the tidal ebb had ceased, the *Alberta's* keel cleared a stony ridge by less than three feet. She floated in what was now seen to be a rock-girt natural basin resembling the inside of a small crater. She had dropped seventy-odd feet in a few hours, a phenomenal fall.

This sudden ebb of the tidal waters had engaged the attention of all on board, for her expected careening would have resulted in further injury to her damaged hull. The growing darkness added much to Kendle's difficulties, and Beth could hear her brother and a sailor hammering between-decks forward near the chain-locker. They were attempting to repair damage already done the cut-water plates.

The feverish activities, illumined by the indispensable lanterns, were at all times visible to the mutineers, who themselves remained outside the circle of illumination. Rendered desperate by the failure of Salerno's bluff, they were now slipping forward in the outer gloom—armed with knives, axes and the sealing harpoons of which they had stripped the after lockers.

Foreseeing possible trouble, Kendle had mounted a guard, but his man already lay silent, his skull laid open by an ax. An instant more of their stealthy progress, and the pirates had been upon the crew in sufficient force to insure a quick victory.

But of a sudden one of Salerno's men yelled in pain, clutched at his breast and toppled to his face in the scuppers. Another who crouched near by, startled by this unexpected happening, groped wildly and collapsed, rolling and choking horribly, before he too lay still.

Checked by these sudden silent blows, it was a moment before the marauders recovered their wits. Then, with their blood-lust aroused, the pirates made their bid for supremacy, and swarmed, a yelling mob, up the slightly tilted deck. Though the forward barricade had been left unguarded, the crew—warned by the outcry—were now hurrying to arms.

Of Allan Kendle, it may truthfully be said that he was a brave and fearless man. But at sight of that murderous band of half-caste, disease-marked thugs, with their grisly weapons upraised, rushing upon him like fiends and led by a man he had openly defied, he hesitated.

Had he emptied his revolver into their faces and thrown himself headlong upon them, he might have repulsed the first of them, for the advantage of position was his. The sailors might then have reached his side in time to reinforce him. But despite his swift reaction after this momentary paralysis, the golden opportunity was forever lost. With his gun half-drawn, an oar fell with crushing force upon his skull. As he dropped, the revolver was wrenched from his hand.

Just behind him, within the deck-house, Beth went to her knees at his side. The first of the sailors had now thrown himself into the battle, and in a moment the deck was slippery with blood and aquiver to the struggles of shouting, cursing men. Kendle stirred with a groan as the *mêlée* raged past her, and she attempted to drag him to shelter.

An iron hand upon her arm hauled her erect. The triumphant features of Manuel Salerno leered into her face. Before she could lift a finger, she was seized, overpowered and tightly bound.

SEVERAL of the crew fought their way up the deck; though they dared not use their guns for fear of wounding Beth, the tide was turning against the pirates. Despite inferior numbers, the desperate courage of the sailors began to tell, aided by that momentary demoralization caused the enemy when two of their number went down as if cloven by an unseen hand.

The crew swiftly regained their barricades, and from this fortress fired aft

with their rifles, sending the pirates scurrying for cover.

Salerno, however, was adopting the only course open to him, and for which he had been prepared despite the practical certainty of a victory. Beth felt her captor lurch across the deck and clamber clumsily down the ladder into a waiting boat. She heard the rattle of oarlocks under the strong pull of brawny arms. In but a moment she sensed the grinding of the boat's prow upon the shore, which was close by, beneath the frowning cliffs.

Then she was carried through the darkness until, at about two miles from the landing-point, the pirates paused to kindle a fire and consider the new advantage which capture of the girl had given them.

Almost immediately argument raged between Salerno and his huge lieutenant, one Mendez—a false name, surely, for no white blood ran in the veins of this thick-lipped, yellow-jowled brute. Their dispute was punctuated by the occasional unintelligible gibberish of the others.

The veiny animal-like eyes of Mendez the giant had been sliding over the defiant captive from time to time as he argued, but suddenly Salerno stepped between him and the girl.

"No! No—but you are the great fool! We hold her unharm'. We trade her for guns. With guns we take the ship, and then—"

Mendez interrupted with a muttered obscenity inaudible to Beth. Ruffian though he was, Salerno cursed in a fury at what the man had said. He was reaching for his pistol, when with a sudden lunge the other whipped a long knife from his belt and drove it upward into the vitals of his leader.

Salerno's pistol exploded harmlessly into the earth. An instant later Mendez' heavy heel was stamping his head and face into the earth. The others looked on with calculating indifference.

For Beth La Salle, the last veil of uncertainty as to her fate was torn aside. Mendez picked up and pocketed the gun. With a last stamp upon the dead thing underfoot, he approached her. She felt a qualm of unspeakable nausea.

OF this scene Kioga had been silent witness. From Beth's first appearance on deck, he had followed the swift march of events. He had watched calmly enough the progress of the battle on the *Alberta*—whose odds he had some-

what evened beforehand with his two arrows. He had marveled at the variety of complexions and features among Salerno's men. But a red mist had curtained his vision when he saw the white girl subjected to violence and carried off in the pirate's arms.

It was no concern of Hawk's if they chose to kill one another—the more food for Ako the vulture! But the girl—that, for some reason, was another matter. Instinctively he recognized her beauty. The blood sang through his veins when she smiled. Her fine courage—not once had she cried out—he admired that. He would see that no harm came to her.

AS Mendez approached the captive with drawn knife, Hawk was moving swiftly from behind the tree which concealed him. But Mendez, far from injuring Beth with the blade, merely cut the cords that bound her wrists and ankles. No man was he to take unfair advantage of the helpless woman. His was a tenderer way!

Beth was under no illusion as to his intent. She had long since decided that at the first opportunity she would attempt to escape in the wilderness about her, and try to find her way back to the *Alberta*. But with the thought there suddenly rose the long, blood-chilling spiral of a hungry animal's howl, coming from somewhere along this wild coast.

To a man, the pirates ceased their jabbering and fell silent, listening. Mendez himself stood arrested in his stride by that terrible heavy note of menace, before he threw off its spell and stepped forward again. But of all who heard, Kioga was most affected by its tones, for he alone recognized it for the meat-signal of the coastal scavenger-wolves, perhaps the most terrible band of all.

Beth had momentarily evaded her brawny attacker, and concluding that to be torn to pieces by wild beasts would be far preferable to what lay before her, she wheeled and darted toward the unknown blackness.

For all his huge size, however, Mendez could move swiftly. Sick with despair, Beth felt his great hand close upon her arm.

Then came an interruption.

As if conjured out of thin air, there appeared at her side a tall brown form of the most striking physical proportions. Decked in the trappings of an Indian, with war-paint smeared over face and body, there was little about Hawk that



As if he weighed but a pound, Mendez was hurled full into the midst of the pirates.

could have inspired feelings of relief or trust.

But the rude grip upon her arm loosened. The huge Mendez was hurled back a dozen feet by a stunning blow upon the chest, which resounded like a pounded drum.

And then, as Kioga's arms closed for the first time about the yielding form of a woman and he felt the beat of her heart against his own breast, a strange new elemental sensation flamed to life within him—the protective instinct. A moment thus, before Mendez was pointing his gun at this apparition.

Hawk had seen death and that black object go hand in hand—indeed Mokuyi had told him much about the powerful weapons of the white man. Quick as thought, the whip's long coil snaked forth, barked stingingly against Mendez' wrist, knocking the weapon far into the brush and lapping about his hairy forearm. Then Hawk dragged the giant toward him, thrusting the girl to one side.

With a profane snarl of exultation, the pirate drew the knife still wet with the blood of Salerno; and Beth breathed a prayer, not for herself, but for the safety of this creature who dared to face such a murderous pack single-handed. But she was quickly relieved of any apprehension for the Snow Hawk.

The hoarse cry of triumph had hardly left his lips when Mendez, usurper-chief of this scum of foreign seas, met the fate he had so long evaded and so richly deserved. Fingers that were steel hooks closed upon and throttled the growl in his throat. There was the terrible sound of tearing cartilage, the dull snap of bone breaking beneath flesh. As if he weighed but a pound, Mendez was lifted bodily into the air and hurled full into the midst of the pirates now rushing to his aid.

IN an instant Kioga was caught amid the throng of his enemies, slashing with knives, like dholes surrounding a lion and struggling to pull him down. Hawk fought back with the elemental weapons nature had given him—his hands, his brain, but most of all with that unequaled quickness, strength and agility which had carried him through worse encounters than this.

Too late the pirates discovered that they were at grips with no ordinary man. Three had fallen under the weight of that great thrashing body. Now a tall half-

caste hurtled aside, his skull crushed by the fierce quarter-stroke, a telling sudden blow Hawk had learned among the bears. Another crumpled in his tracks beneath a terrific blow of the open hand. That sharp crack, followed by a hoarse scream of pain, was the breaking of a knife-arm bone.

KIOGA scarce felt the answering blows which rained upon him, in his wild anxiety to shake off his assailants and get the girl to a point of safety with all possible speed.

His lightning attack, that exhibition of suddenly unchained power, sent a rush of admiration surging through Beth's veins, sent her forth beating with futile little fists, to offer some help, however little. But the pirates broke ground; and then it was over, as the remaining few of them sought only escape.

Now he would vent his savage fury upon their prostrate forms in the manner of the aborigine he seemed to be. Beth turned shuddering away. But to her astonishment, a quiet voice with a cool, curiously foreign accent, startled her, coming incongruously from his hideously vermillioned face.

"Quick!" Before she could answer, great arms lifted her easily. She felt herself ascending the cliffs in powerful effortless bounds, until they came to a pause upon a rocky ledge. Then she fairly choked upon the almost palpable odor which permeated the night.

Glancing downward, she perceived in the firelight a scene which would haunt her memory forever. Silent as stealthy ghouls, several gaunt wolflike beasts had appeared beneath the trees. Their once gray breasts were covered with shreds of the ocean's unwanted dead, which was their steady dietary. In their stench was the advertisement of their function—carrion-wolves, brothers-in-trade of the vultures.

Most of the pirates had scattered in fear at sight of the sinister newcomers. But there were several who lay motionless. One of these now moved, drawing the baleful yellow focus of several pairs of glowing eyes. Deliberately the nearest wolf fleshed his fangs to the gums, tearing out a great piece from the unconscious man's vitals. Soon others, with horrible concentration, approached to worry at the remaining forms. Came the sickening crunch of bone between iron jaws. Then, mercifully, a great mass of pendant foliage shut the scene

from Beth's shocked view, as her rescuer bore her up the cliffs toward the deep gloom of the interior.

They were about halfway to the summit when, as out of the mouth of a tortured maniac, there came a shuddering scream, abruptly terminated, in which there was mingled all the horror, realization and despair which the human throat can voice; the unconscious pirate had come back to life, only to meet a fearful death.

The quivering girl knew now why her blood had seemed turned to water when she heard that first ululating howl. . . .

From the moment her rescuer abandoned the cliffs, Beth knew only that they were passing ever deeper into a thick curtain of blackness through which her eyes could not penetrate an inch, but which seemed to offer no barriers to the vision of this savage.

Slowly the roar of the sea faded, giving place to other sounds, the stealthy, fear-some pulsations of a wilderness alive with predatory nocturnal life. Suddenly he paused and bounded up on a log that bridged a gorge. Here they waited momentarily, as below them the ghostly form of a tigress slid out of a cave and as silently vanished. The carnal reek of the beast was evident even to Beth's untrained nostrils. A little thrill of added terror possessed her now.

Thereafter their way lay through the ravines that were everywhere on the forest floor. In one of these he paused again to grope in a hollow tree-trunk for the rope and grapnel, for which he had had no use at the village. In its place he put the bow, which was useless anyway without arrows. Then he continued on.

NOW and again, when they were faced with a chasm which defied even his great leaping powers, the grapnel came into use, and together they swung slowly above the ink-black depths and came to rest on the far side. Several times she felt a movement of his arm, followed by a hiss and a flat report, glimpsing the recoil of yellow eyes and dim lean shapes at that sound. As often, he gave ground to some huge indistinct hulk rearing up in their path, in avoiding other and larger beasts of the lower forests; and as soon as possible he took to the mountains.

The rope which he drew tight under her arms seemed an unnecessary precaution to Beth. Even if free, she would have been as completely lost as a child abandoned in the jungles of the Amazon.

As they ascended steadily, she glimpsed the moon, hanging low over the horizon like a swollen orange, and throwing a path of yellow light upon the tree-tops, which billowed gently, like a vast sea. Soon she could perceive the nature of the cliffs toward which they were mounting. A thousand feet of granite lay sheer between them and the timbered valley whose leafy giants—mere dwarfs seen from this height—were rooted in solid earth four hundred feet lower still. Above, the aspect was even more threatening, for a vertical wall of polished rock extended up, seemingly to infinity.

SURELY no trail could exist beyond this stone shoulder; yet beyond it the man found hand- and foothold. Then he vanished, leaving her flattened against the cliff with a feeling of complete isolation, above that unspeakably lonely and desolate wilderness, connected to life only by the strand of rope between him and her.

A jerk on the strand brought her attention to an overhanging ledge thirty feet up and some ten feet to one side. Then she realized why the rope was tied about her. He was beckoning to her to swing out and over space, so that he could draw her up. She essayed it once, before every fiber rebelled against her will to obey. She shut her eyes, holding back.

Suddenly the rope grew taut. She was drawn, unresisting, off and up from the ledge, to swing rigid and shuddering with cold fear, back and forth high above the distant valley. Then he pulled her easily up onto a wide trail where she was a moment regaining her nerve-control.

Thereafter at the ease with which he negotiated these sickening steeps, she forgot her fears in mounting admiration. She began to wonder how long he could maintain this killing pace. Surely he must tire soon; yet despite his extra burden, his wonderful agility continued undiminished. He jumped and climbed with the ease and strength of a mountain-lion, as if he did not feel her added weight.

They skirted the forest until the giant growth gave place to a lesser. The southern sky was reddening before the short day as they descended to the lower levels. As the hour advanced, she caught glimpses of the park-like open forest. That the pall of Arctic darkness could have hidden such natural splendors was a source of wonder to Beth.

They passed amid man-high ferns and thickets of rhododendron, on a rug of pine needles that gave forth no sound. Graceful lomaria shrouded fallen tree-trunks lying across their way. Lacy licorice ferns festooned the branches of living trees, whose enormous boles vaulted upward like the arching pillars of a cathedral.

Hawk went along, thoughtfully. He recalled the happy hours he had spent in the village of Hopeka with the gentle Indian maiden, Heladi. He had believed himself falling under the spell of her music. Yet he had not been sure of himself where she was concerned, nor of his ability to adjust himself forever to village life—even with Heladi.

But now—now he was beginning to know that man does not live for war alone, that the heart can race with something other than the excitement of hunting and combat.

At last he abated his pace, and the tight pressure of his grip upon the girl.

"Wait here," he said shortly. Obeying, Beth saw him vanish almost before her eyes into the thickets. But he soon reappeared with a few long loose clusters of the narrow fruit of the mountain blackberry. Gratefully she thanked him and ate, finding them both spicy and refreshing. But he did not reply, though his eyes never left her face. Perhaps of English he knew only the few words he had already spoken, picked up no doubt from white men with whom he probably traded. Those few words, however, had been reassuring; and when again she surrendered herself to be borne along in his arms, much of her fear had disappeared.

Under the lulling motion of their steady progress her eyelids fell shut in response to the compelling lassitude induced by long hours without sleep. The tension left her muscles. She listened as in a dream to the rustle of piny foliage and the liquid calls and songs of strange wild birds, of which one in particular, a deep and mellow note, oft repeated, became more and more insistent.

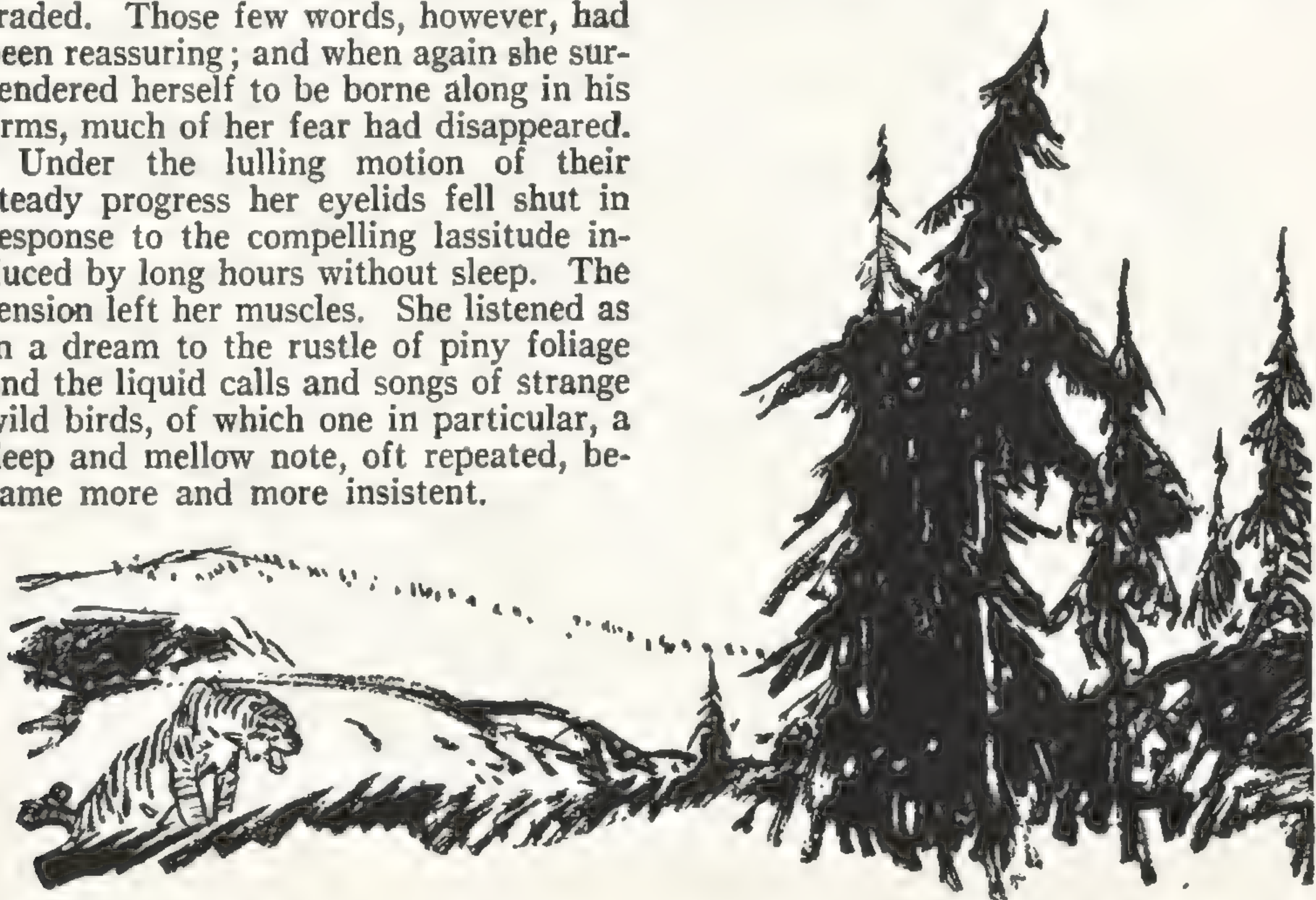
Slowly she opened her eyes, to look upon a scene as strange as ever civilized woman awakened to. Deep rich skins cushioned her reclining body. Steady heat from a bed of glowing embers both warmed and illumined the interior. Thick pelts of tiger, bear and puma adorned the walls and covered the floor. Into these her feet sank as she went to the doorway. Beyond, through a crevice, the sky was marbled reddish purple by the sunset and inlaid with the spires of trees.

Pressure showed the stout barrier to be secured from outside. She was prisoner to the strange denizen of this cave!

With growing wonder she returned to look about her, examining the many objects which enriched the cave. It was as if she had intruded upon some mountain ruler's hide-away.

A great stone occupied one corner, worn smooth by the working of many an arrow- and spear-head. About it lay a war-club and numerous arrows and spears. Several lengths of rope, in various stages of plaiting, caught her eye. Upon the walls depended instruments and trophies of the chase, consisting of cunningly strung necklaces of animal-claws, many bows and lances, and numerous other curious objects—many of them Kioga's own handiwork. One of these, a slim-bladed knife in a leather sheath, she concealed in her coat.

On a rude stone shelf were articles at which she gazed unbelievably: Carefully



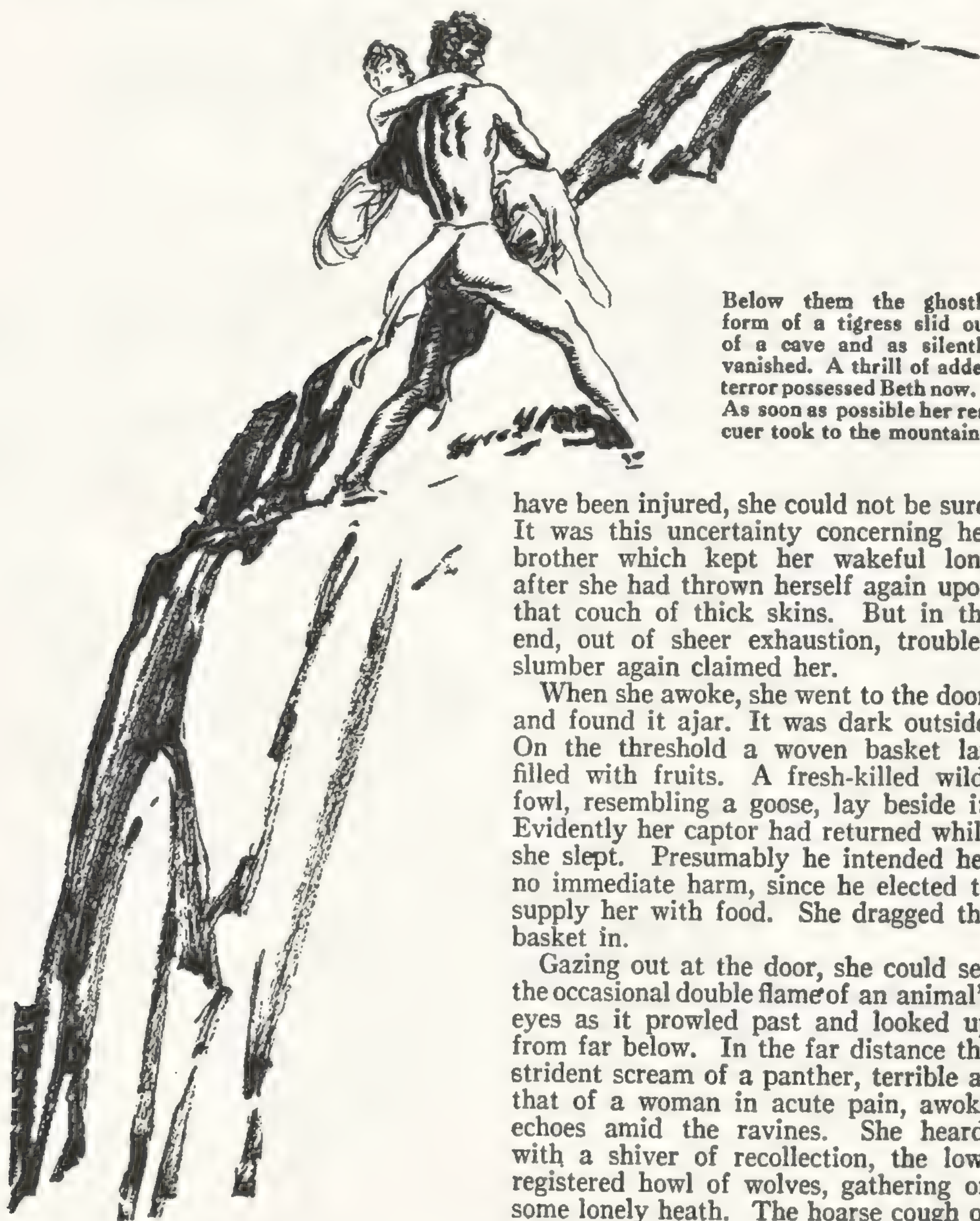
folded and packaged newspapers of ancient date, yellow and brittle with age. Dozens of volumes of well-thumbed books, worn and battered by use. To one side a skin was stretched taut across a wooden frame and covered with picture-drawings and curious hieroglyphics, and ornamented in colored designs. Upon a smooth part of the wall graceful Roman letters had been formed into words and sentences, then partially rubbed away.

Then the girl started. Neatly piled, one upon another, were numberless little golden ingots, resting upon the chest containing the balance of the treasure Hawk had dug up from under the sands years

ago. Into the chest she did not attempt to look, wondering instead about the identity of the absent owner.

Was he in fact the savage Indian he seemed, or some wealthy eccentric, preferring barbaric solitude to the comforts of civilization?

Her thoughts reverted to the ship and to her fears concerning the outcome of the mutiny. Kendle, indeed, had shown signs of returning consciousness, and she felt he would revive, for he was of a powerful constitution. But what of Dan? He had been below during that short and bloody action on deck, and though she prayed that he had come up too late to



Below them the ghostly form of a tigress slid out of a cave and as silently vanished. A thrill of added terror possessed Beth now... As soon as possible her rescuer took to the mountains.

have been injured, she could not be sure. It was this uncertainty concerning her brother which kept her wakeful long after she had thrown herself again upon that couch of thick skins. But in the end, out of sheer exhaustion, troubled slumber again claimed her.

When she awoke, she went to the door, and found it ajar. It was dark outside. On the threshold a woven basket lay filled with fruits. A fresh-killed wild-fowl, resembling a goose, lay beside it. Evidently her captor had returned while she slept. Presumably he intended her no immediate harm, since he elected to supply her with food. She dragged the basket in.

Gazing out at the door, she could see the occasional double flame of an animal's eyes as it prowled past and looked up from far below. In the far distance the strident scream of a panther, terrible as that of a woman in acute pain, awoke echoes amid the ravines. She heard, with a shiver of recollection, the low-registered howl of wolves, gathering on some lonely heath. The hoarse cough of

a tiger in a valley near by sounded almost outside the door.

Returning to the fire, and shivering, but not with cold, she laid on wood until the flames rose brightly, then, kneeling before them, listened to the noises of the midnight forests. It had seemed dangerous to be left alone with the strange savage. But it was infinitely worse to be left alone with one's fears and imaginings. The overpowering loneliness was beginning to batter down at last the fine courage which had sustained her thus far.

CHAPTER XXV

A VAIN ATTEMPT AT RESCUE

WHEN Captain Kendle returned to the consciousness which had been clubbed out of him during the pirate attack, he found the sailors again in control of the *Alberta*. Dan La Salle was unhurt, but several of the crew had sustained knife-wounds, none of which proved fatal. Three of Salerno's men had been killed by rifle-fire, two by an unknown agency. The bodies had been thrown unceremoniously overboard and been made short work of by the sharks at high tide.

Speculation was rife concerning the strange manner in which the first two pirates had died—those who had fallen beneath the hard-driven bolts from Kioga's bow. But since both arrows had passed completely through the flesh and vanished into the sea, the manner of their killing was unknown. In the stress of those moments the possibility of hostile enemies ashore—other than the pirates—received little consideration. It was finally concluded that they had fallen victims to the ill-aimed knife-thrusts of their own allies.

Several moments passed before Kendle could recall the events leading up to Beth's abduction. When the terrible plight of his fiancée penetrated to his dazed brain, the shock, more than the whiskey proffered by La Salle, brought about a rapid return of his strength and faculties.

Dan, he noted, was cool as ice, though the rigid, fighting set of his jaw boded ill for Beth's kidnapers; and his pallor evidenced the strain he was under, as well as the difficulty with which he reined in his impatience to be up and doing for her. Quick to act now, Kendle ordered a boat put overside. Dan was the first man into it.

TO protests from the mate that it would be wiser to wait for daylight, to avoid possible ambush, Kendle replied that the little daylight would not be of much help, and that he preferred any risk to the dangers of delay.

"There's more than pirates on that shore, sir," volunteered one of the crew. "We seen 'em by lantern-light—panthers big as lions, an' some bear, one of 'em a whopper."

"We're armed for big game," snapped Kendle. "That's what we started out after. Wild animals have learned to steer clear of man nowadays. I'll match my rifle against anything that prowls"

He spoke with the authority of one who had hunted on five continents. His confidence was quickly imparted to his men, five of whom followed him down into the boat. A few quick strokes, and they were ashore.

They had gone scarcely a hundred paces north when a huge shadow loomed up in their path, and a thunderous growl boomed forth into the blackness. Although Kendle instantly fired several steel-jacketed bullets at the thing, his aim was rendered unsteady by the sputtering of Dan's hooded lantern. A deafening roar was the only answer.

"Bear!" shouted La Salle. "Look out—he's coming!"

The mighty animal had dropped to all fours and was charging. Kendle himself, in the forefront of the party, miraculously escaped with being knocked down, trodden upon; and his heavy coat prevented the claws from cutting deep. But when the bear released its first victim, the man was partially dismembered. Another received a crippling smash from a hooked paw, besides being badly bitten in the body. Dan, just behind Kendle, bled profusely from a severe claw-wound in his side.

The wounded animal charged repeatedly and with diabolical persistence; but its blind attack convinced Kendle that he had destroyed its sight. With greatest difficulty the remainder of the party got their wounded back to the boat. Only then did the enraged animal's assaults desist, though they could hear its savage growls as it ravaged the thickets in search of them.

With new respect for the fierce wild denizens of Nato'wa, Kendle and his men tenderly lifted their injured back aboard. The remainder of the night was spent in making them as comfortable as possible.

Ignoring his own hurts, which were

superficial, Kendle stanchd the flow of blood from La Salle's side, while he reproached himself for omitting the precautions urged upon him by the others.

"No man could've foreseen this, sir," declared Jason. "Look, now, the bleeding's stopped already. The young gentleman'll be good as new in a couple of days, so 'e will."

Faint from loss of blood but fully rational, Dan interrupted Kendle's expressed intention to make a new start.

"Wait a bit longer, Allan. She'll be better off if you don't crowd those fellows too hard. Never mind me, old man. Let them patch you up. Rest a little—you've earned it!"

It was good counsel. Kendle was grateful for its implied confidence, and submitted to medication and bandaging. But he got no rest.

LATER came the terrific wolfish clamor to the north, then a heart-rending outcry—whether of fear or agony they could not tell—which threw Kendle into a frenzy of apprehension for Beth. Dan was spared this—a sedative had put him to sleep.

The grim silence that followed was more ominous by far than the moaning of savage beasts, and at last Kendle could bear it no longer.

"I'm going," he said quietly, turning to the men. "It'll be dawn in an hour. Who'll bear me company?"

Not a man of that little crew but now stood forth, offering to serve in the desperate pursuit. It was like Kendle even at such a time, to reject several who, he knew, had families or dependents at home. Selecting four, and arming them, he left orders that the propellers be freed of the chains which bound them, and that the engines be kept in readiness for a quick start—though he despaired of ever negotiating those sea-swept shoals.

By lantern-light the rescue-party easily followed the plain trail of the pirates in the sand above high-water mark. With horror Kendle saw other broad, strongly claw-marked tracks converging upon it. That they were the tracks of wolves he knew, though he had never seen any so large or so numerous.

At red dawn, they came abruptly upon a scene of tragedy that fairly made their blood run cold. Beneath the little tongue of forest which here came down almost to the sea, the carnal remains of some grisly midnight feast were scattered all about. As they approached, a

host of gaunt malodorous black birds rose heavily in air and perched silently near by. They were ravens, birds of death, the bone-pickers of the wilderness.

A movement in a tree near by caught Kendle's eye. In a state of abject fear four men clung tightly to the bole of the tree part way up its side.

Kendle barked an order from behind his gun. One by one they descended. The story he wrung from the only one of them who had a working knowledge of English was incredible to him; yet it remained unaltered by the direst threats of punishment.

The man told of the girl's abduction by a naked savage, of the arrival of a pack of great wolves, and their departure after having devoured two of the men. The four survivors had escaped by climbing low trees, but one other had made a dash inland, armed with the dead Salerno's stolen revolver.

This recital had the confirmation of the grim evidence scattered beneath the trees. Dispatching one of his men back to the ship, guarding the mutineers, Kendle took up the pursuit, hoping against hope that they had been telling truth, and that somewhere, somehow, they would find Beth.

Toiling up the precipitous cliffs, they plunged into the pathless mazes of the wilderness inland. When, beneath a great tree, they found the scalped and arrow-riddled body of the remaining pirate, they were compelled at last to believe that primitive men inhabited this unknown shore. . . .

TO men fighting a way through unknown jungle, the beauty of the forest went unnoticed. Overhead the interlocking branches of the giant trees shut out all but a faint twilight which but added to the obscurity on the forest floor. Tangles of wild-rose vines and impenetrable thickets of devil's-club made progress all but impossible, while ever and again they met with baffling barriers of sapling undergrowth lashed almost solidly together by grapevine. Dim, ghostly and hanging with pennants of moss were the trees about a swamp in which they were all but engulfed. They lost two valuable hours crossing a gloomy desert of fallen trees carried low by landslide, over which the Snow Hawk and Beth had passed in as many minutes.

Without visible landmarks or horizon the quick nightfall found them hopelessly beleaguered by the wilderness, but de-



terminated to push on, cost what it might, when morning came. Thoughtful of their experience the previous night, and at terrible cost to their exhausted strength, they threw up a wall of dead branches and logs before a depression in a cliff. Then, not daring to build a fire, they spent a wretched endless night amid darkness relieved only by the luminous glowing orbs of unseen animals roaring and clawing at the log-barrier in vain endeavor to gain access to the prey scented within it. Sleep was out of the question.

In constant fear of a night attack, Kendle had finally concluded that the native people, whoever they were, had retired. Unfortunately the Indians—canoe-men from Hopeka village—who had come upon the armed pirate who had taken to the forest, had lost two men themselves in the fight before killing and scalping him. And they still lurked in the neighborhood in hopes of further avenging their dead. Of this the white party remained unaware.

Just before dawn something struck deep into a log of their wall with a venomous thud. Reaching forth, Kendle's hand encountered a feathered shaft. Noting whence the arrow had come, he trained his sights in that direction and waited. As it grew lighter, he saw the outline of a human form, immovable as stone, and his finger closed upon the trigger. When his rifle spoke, a wild yell of mingled astonishment and pain announced a hit. A horrible throaty, long-drawn cry then echoed through the ravines, followed by a hissing barrage of arrows from every direction out front.

AS the white men strained vainly to glimpse the hidden foe, the savages executed a *coup* from above, dropping to the number of about a dozen upon the little fort. A quick and bloody struggle ensued, in which two of Kendle's men fell mortally wounded, and were scalped before they were dead.

Kendle himself, and Martin, were then easily overcome, bound wrist to wrist and shoved out of the barricade, which the savages leveled. They could not but know that they were in the power of hostile Indians. There was no mistaking the painted lineaments of their captors for those of any other race. The feathered crests, shaven scalps and quill-decorated quivers made identification doubly certain.

Stumbling over ground-vines and protruding roots, the white men were hurried to a waiting canoe between a double row of silent muscular men whose kind they had been taught were almost extinct.

Like two other men and a woman long dead, they too erroneously believed themselves prisoners to undisciplined American Indians of the far northern frontiers. As they forged upstream to they knew not what, their only consolation lay in their hope of ultimate rescue by the Canadian white police.

DAWN came before Beth La Salle moved, startled by a faint sound outside the cave. She approached the door to investigate.

Beyond, in an attitude of watchful guardianship, stood a tall figure, molded in lines which the graver of Praxiteles might have carved. Great drops of morning dew glistened like moonstones on his smooth brown skin and blue-black hair. Naked but for loincloth and moccasins, he might have just stepped from the pedestal of a bronze statue, a living composite of all the mightiest Ogallala chieftains. Such a warrior might have led the first vanguard of the Indian race into the New World. Stripped of his war-like trappings and crowned with a leafy chaplet, he would have personified some victorious athlete of ancient Sparta, fresh from the field of glory.

Snow Hawk had removed his paint at the hot springs. For the first time Beth looked upon her rescuer's features as they really were. Could that nobly formed head and those fine features have lent themselves to the horrid grotesquery of that other wild and repellent mask?

It seemed unbelievable. And yet there was no mistaking the perfect physique. No amount of war-paint could have concealed that!

It was at this moment that Kioga glanced abruptly up, to find her gaze upon him. It was his eyes which first won her trust—the cool clear blue-green of them, brilliantly alight in the tawny face and regarding her levelly from beneath the black brows. If man's nature be reflected through his eyes, certainly there was neither guile nor dishonorable intent in the glance that now so calmly met her own.

A moment passed before he returned her first greeting. The sight of her, standing there with questioning dilated pupils, was one he would always remember. He took in her pearly clearness of skin, her gracious bearing, and stood spellbound like a devotee before a shrine.

That she was one of his own race he knew instinctively. That he must await her invitation to enter his own rude habitation he sensed without thought.

Coloring faintly under that frank and open admiration, to cover her embarrassment Beth apologized for having been a burden upon him. Then: "Won't you come in," she said tentatively, not certain that he would understand, "and let me thank you for everything?"

"For carrying you off?" was the grave and surprising reply, surprising in that she might with reason have expected a more uncouth response, if any at all.

"You do speak English!" she exclaimed, somewhat taken aback by his simple directness.

His answer was slow and a little halting. "I understand better than I speak."

Beth's thoughts darted anxiously back to the mutiny on the ship. Perhaps he would know what had happened after her seizure. She was about to ask him, when of his own accord he told her what he had seen in the few moments before he left the ship's vicinity to follow the mutineers up the shore.

TWO men had rushed on deck just as the conflict ended in victory for the crew. One of these whom Kioga described, was undoubtedly Dan La Salle. With her fears appeased by this information, the girl's thoughts returned to her surroundings.

She noted that her captor's speech, however hesitant, was all but perfect otherwise, and complimented him on it. His answer astonished her.

"I have not heard spoken English for years—except my own."

"Have you no white friends?"

"I never saw white men before yesterday."

"But isn't this the mainland of America?"

"I have read that there are three Americas," he answered. "I have never read of Nato'wa. I think it is a land unknown to white men."

"But you are certainly a white man," she asserted, scanning his features anew.

He glanced at her, casting about for the right words.

"I am," he began, then paused to reach into a little box on the stone shelf, taking from it an oblong of silk. "My father was a white-skin. This was his." He held forth the tiny replica of the Stars and Stripes, no larger than a woman's handkerchief. Beth examined it.

"You're an American!" she exclaimed, impulsively extending her hand, and feeling glad without knowing why. "That's the American flag. We're countrymen!"

So Kioga confirmed what he had suspected from reading the log-book. And as he took that slim hand in his, he knew that a great change had come in his life.

The knowledge that they were related by race had greatly eased Beth's apprehensions. When Kioga went to the door and returned, bearing the still-warm and steaming body of a buck, which he laid at her feet, the dangers of her situation seemed infinitely less overwhelming than they had but a short hour ago.

OVER the roasting saddle of venison she replied to his thousand questions concerning the outer world, and its many different peoples. Avidly he drank in all she said, and frequently she was aware that he listened more to the sound of her voice than to the import of her words. This pleased her, somehow, and she looked upon her strange host with increasing wonder.

Here was such a man as the world had never seen: A king would have envied him his natural dignity, and the expressive grace with which, by slow gesture, he amplified his deliberate and often halting words. What on earth was such a man doing in such a place?

As if in answer to that, he told her something of his strange life: of Mokuyi the Wolf; of Awena the Flower, his Indian foster-mother. But of Heladi, the Indian girl toward whom his thoughts had often turned of late, he said nothing,

though she was much in his thoughts. He was later to regret the omission.

And listening to him, Beth's past life seemed a remote dream, by comparison with the vital reality of the present, intensified by the rumble of distant thunder, whose reverberations rattled the armaments hanging upon these walls.

And now Kioga looked back upon those dull hours of tuition in the etiquette of civilized men, and was doubly thankful to Mokuyi. That training alone—and the tireless practice of reading aloud, by which he had familiarized himself with his native tongue—put him on an equal footing with this lovely creature.

Never had roast venison tasted better than this prepared by her deft and capable fingers. The deep Indian significance of her making ready his food struck home with sudden meaning. Yet every passing second brought nearer the necessity of facing the problems which had been created the moment he carried her off from the midst of danger.

To take her to the village would be unthinkable. Such a life as he knew there could hardly be acceptable to her. Adjustment, if it were to take place at all, must be all on his side. Already he was intolerant at thought of separation from her, contriving ways and means by which to prolong this new association which already meant so much to him.

IN a little while he again went forth to seek the best and finest delicacies the wilderness afforded. He chanced his life to drive a bear out of a thicket of particularly luscious berries which he thought she would like. He snatched an especially plump wild pigeon from the very jaws of a puma at the risk of being clawed to ribbons. He brought her armloads of wild-flowers and burned scented grasses in the cave. No polished courtier could have displayed more respect and consideration for his queen than this man, raised in the lap of barbarism, lavished upon Beth La Salle.

This sincere, unconscious gallantry, alternately touched and embarrassed her; while the absolute fealty mirrored in his eyes gave her a woman's satisfaction, it also gave rise to certain fears.

He had said nothing of returning her to the ship. The short hours of daylight were passing rapidly, and it would soon be night again. Last night, out of sheer weariness, she had slept, the door of her chamber guarded by this white man who

called himself by an Indian's name. Indeed, no harm had come to her, but dared she rest tonight? On the other hand, to betray anxiety, or ask to be returned to the *Alberta* at once, might only impress him with a sense of his complete power over her.

However well she concealed her apprehensions, he noted them, none the less.

"You are afraid?" he said with a little smile.

"Not for myself," she answered quickly, and then, her lips trembling: "But Dan—and the others—oh, I *am* afraid—for them. Take me back!"

Take her back! That he dared not risk as yet. Instead: "I will go to the ship," he told her, "and report to you. A storm is coming. I cannot take you with me; but you will be safe here till I return."

Perforce she acquiesced, and of her fears gave no further sign; but when later, in his absence, she lay down to rest again on his soft couch, she faced the door, and the fingers of one hand were tight-closed about the handle of the knife, which until now she had forgotten.

Gradually the fire burned to a bed of embers. The cave grew dark. The girl was relaxing, when suddenly she felt a fresh current of air and heard the great door creak stealthily inward. Through lowered lids she watched, tense in every fiber, conscious of that steel blade hard and cold in the concealment of her forearm. She sensed, rather than saw, a silent shadow move toward her, felt the warmth of another body bending close above her. The beating of her heart thundered in her ears: yet somehow she preserved the even regularity of her breathing. She must give no sign, make no move that would reveal her wakefulness. But with infinite caution, the fraction of an inch at a time, she drew her right hand, gripping its keen weapon, to a position of readiness.

THUS, for perhaps half a minute, she lay with muscles at painful tension, wondering if she could bring herself to strike even did the need arise.

And then, so gently as almost to pass unnoticed, the soft folds of a feather robe fell upon her, light as warm air. The bending shadow at her side uprose, soundlessly moved away. A moment later she heard again that stealthy creak of the great barrier.

With a reaction of horror she went limp at realization of how near she had

been to rewarding an act of utmost thoughtfulness with a fatal stab.

Twice again she heard him come in, once to stand quietly beside her, once to replenish the fire with new wood. But after that, though he came again, she heard no more. With her last fears conquered, Beth sank into a dreamless sleep.

EARLY next morning Kioga set forth by himself toward the shore and the *Alberta*. With Beth safe in the cave and well provided for, he was consumed by curiosity as to the final outcome of the battle he had witnessed on the ship's deck. But it was some hours after Kandle and his sailors had fallen captive to the Shoni tribesmen that Kioga reached the coast.

Climbing down the cliffs a mile south of the ship, he approached along shore with caution, for as yet he knew not whether his reception would be friendly or hostile. Just after dusk he came within view of the yacht, lying quietly, all lights extinguished, a ghostly blur in the gloom. In the shadows on her deck he could see no one.

Passing from cover to cover, he finally reached the rocky point where her bowline was attached. Waiting a few minutes, he heard no sound from the *Alberta* save the tap of her dangling antenna against the metal funnel, and the watery drip from her lines as they alternately grew taut or slacked away in response to her movement. She was apparently deserted.

Intrigued by this strange circumstance, and determined to go aboard come what might, he put his knife between his teeth. It was the work of but a moment for his trained sinews to swing him hand over hand along her bow-rope. An instant later he vaulted up over the rail, and dropped soundlessly to his feet beside the forecastle hatch.

Silent and alert as a panther on the prowl, he padded back to the deck-house, and near an entrance listened for any sound of life. Hearing nothing, he stepped into the inner gloom; and finding a stairway, went silently down, to pause again with straining ears on the landing.

His groping hand encountered a door, which he opened, moving in and feeling along the wall, while his eyes noted the opaque circles of the seaward portholes. He was in the dining-saloon, abaft the galley, when unexpectedly there came a blinding flood of light which dazzled him

momentarily. His hand had struck against a light-switch! Pausing to experiment, he turned the lights off and on, leaving them aglow to glance swiftly about the room which Beth had occupied after that the advent of the mutineers.

A silver link bracelet lay upon a dressing-table. He picked it up to use as evidence by which to assure Beth he had been aboard. Then, lest he be seen, he quickly put out the lights again and entered the galley, into which the early moonlight had begun to pour in two cylindrical yellow beams.

The appetizing odor of newly cooked food met his nostrils. On a table he saw a pile of freshly baked biscuits. Instantly he appropriated a handful, knocking as many more onto the floor as he paused munching one before the refrigerator. A few experimental twists of the handle brought its door swinging open, revealing the *Alberta's* last cold chicken and other edible delicacies.

Hurriedly Kioga fell to, with appetite whetted by his long trip from cave to coast. Ten minutes passed, the while he dined royally upon canned peaches, boiled beets, potatoes and half a fresh custard pudding, not one of which had he ever tasted before. With his hunger thus hastily satisfied, he was picking the last bones of his chicken when he heard a cough. In an instant he had his ear against the door leading to the forecastle. Quietly moving aside the furniture piled against it, he was about to open the door, but changed his mind. Like the Indian he was, he wished to see within the forecastle without himself being seen.

RECALLING the hatch, through which earlier he had seen men entering the forward part of the ship, he went up the stairs to the deck again. Listening at the hatch-cover, he heard voices below. The cover was tightly fastened. The forecastle was a prison. Softly he loosened the cover and raised it an inch. A pale line of light escaped. Glancing down, he recognized several of the mutineers, securely bound and handcuffed with pieces of chain. The light within the forecastle had been made invisible to anyone ashore by the use of canvas patches, drawn across the ports. Evidently the white party feared some danger from that quarter.

But where were the crew? Why had the ship been abandoned? Why was it empty of life save for a handful of men chained in the forecastle?

MYSTIFIED, he returned to the deck-house. This time he saw, tacked upon the wall-panel, a note. Snatching it away, by the moonlight coming through a window he examined it. It read:

"Allan: Everything is ship-shape on board. We've gone ashore for fresh water—and game, if we can get any. —Dan."

Determined to take advantage of this opportunity to explore the ship, Kioga next entered the saloon, shut the door behind him and waited, senses alert to detect any sound. There was none. His hand slid along the wall seeking a light-switch. Here was something, cold and metallic, over which his hand played. Then in the darkness he saw a sudden lurid flash—and brought up across the saloon with a crash. His arm had struck a bit of live base wire behind the radio transmitter.

This was no ship's corpse, violated by the sea, such as he had boarded in that exciting crowded hour of years ago, but a thing alive. Its nervous system had shed forth light at his touch. It breathed through ventilators, had the warmth of life, the power to injure. What he now felt, alone upon this modern craft, was certainly not fear, but an apprehension born of the strange circumstances of her abandonment, and heightened by the knowledge that his lightest touch might wake this sleeping giantess anew.

In the passageway he tried the doors leading to all the after staterooms, halting in the pitch-black corridor, awaiting any sound from within. As he reached for the last knob, he felt it move inward as if drawn back by an unseen hand. A stream of moonlight bathed the passage. Flattened against the wall, with drawn knife Kioga waited, yet no one came forth. It was uncanny.

THEN something furry and soft was rubbing against his shins. A half-formed superstition died a natural death in his mind, as the ship's cat purred between his feet. He bent to stroke its back, when suddenly he was conscious of furtive movement somewhere behind him—movements akin to the first movements of the killers along the game-trails after the Arctic dusk. Vague and uncertain, it was none the less perceptible to one of whose senses were sharp as a deer's.

Instantly his thoughts went to the mutineers in the fore-castle. Though he

had carefully re-secured the hatch, he had forgotten to move the furniture back against the galley door. In two bounds he was up the ten steps leading to the saloon.

Passing hastily through it, his wrist struck against something, and hearing another click, he waited for the lights to go on; but nothing happened, so far as he could judge. He went on, unsuspecting that he had all unwittingly set the ship's voice speaking. In the saloon he had just quitted, filaments in a radio-set glowed cherry-red. Human voices held converse. The music of another continent poured softly into the deck-saloon. But he heard nothing through the after door, which had already closed behind him.

Rounding the deck-house, he crept quietly forward, again to lift and peer down the hatch. Strange: the pirates, all of them, slept in various attitudes, nor did he awaken them. Some one else must be on board, moving as stealthily as he moved.

As Kioga lowered the hatch-cover, a door was softly closing behind a form entering the deck-saloon from the inner passageway.

AN hour before, Dan La Salle had gone ashore with the rest of the crew on a hunt for meat. Finding his strength impaired by his wound, he had returned to the lifeboat and prepared to come back on board. Glancing at the ship, he had seen the lights go on and off. Instantly suspicious, he rowed quietly out, muffling the oar-locks with strips of a handkerchief, and took the precaution of boarding via the off-shore ladder.

Entering the wheel-house, he picked up a flashlight, armed himself with an automatic from Kendle's desk, and went quietly below via the staircase Kioga had used. With his left hand he directed a quick flash across the dining-saloon. It was empty.

Entering the galley, he trod on a biscuit. A glance showed several scattered about the floor, as well as other untoward things, which he noted with narrowing eyes.

The refrigerator yawned wide. The plump fowl he had seen put in was a skeleton of well-picked bones. Everything else had been either devoured or thoroughly sampled. The furniture which had been set against the fore-castle door was moved. He did not move it back, lest he betray his presence. Undoubt-

edly, some one had been here within a very few minutes.

With pistol held ready, he stole on deck again, checking tense at the deck-saloon door. Voices sounded from within. Advancing his automatic, he pushed the door slowly open. Then he relaxed a little, realizing that he heard only the radio. Had it been turned on when he left? He was not sure.

Sweeping the room with his light, he next went down into the passage 'tween-decks, opened all the stateroom doors, played the light in each, saw nothing. Then a door closed softly behind him. Wheeling with pistol raised and hair on end, he saw the ship's cat stroll purring into the light of his flash. He laughed quietly at the absurdity of his fears. With light aglow he retraced his steps and mounted to the upper deck, scoffing at his own nervousness.

And as he came out upon the landward deck, a face was visible for a split second in the moon's light aft. Its sly cruel grin revealed broken stump-like teeth in a misshapen, receding jaw which hung loosely below a flat nose and eyes that were like oblique slits in yellow paper. A human figure, wet and dripping, flattened back against the deck-house, blending into the shadows. With the hasty movement, the braided hair, which had been coiled upon the egg-shaped head, fell out behind like a snake, almost touching the deck. The man carried a keen, wicked knife. Of this prowler Dan saw nothing.

But the sharp eyes of another missed not one move of the skulker aft. Returning from the forecastle hatch, Kioga had come upon a wet trail leading astern from the off-shore ladder. Almost at the same moment, he glimpsed Dan by the reflected light of the flash he carried. Watching through the saloon windows, he waited to see by which door he would leave, before pursuing that other trail which rounded the deck-house and disappeared.

YEARS ago, Mokuyi had told him of the deadliness of civilized weapons. He recalled the destruction he had seen wrought upon the pirates, and knew Dan's pistol to be loaded with danger. Loath to expose himself—a stranger coming out of the dark—to the white-man's quick-speaking gun, he wished first to disarm him of it and then make himself known as a friend, lest the other shoot first and listen afterward.

If he followed the other trail astern, the opportunity to come upon Dan unexpectedly might be lost. Scorning the ladder leading to the navigating bridge, with a catlike bound he grasped the rail atop the deck-house and swung up over it. Two steps carried him to the opposite rail. Glancing down, he dimly saw La Salle moving forward. Close behind him, naked to the waist, stole one of the half-castes who had made good his escape from the wolves by seeking cover in the forest. On bare feet the man stole upon Dan, with knife drawn and held point forward, sword-fashion, the better to deliver the eviscerating upward slash. Another step brought him directly below Kioga, watching as a cat watches a mouse. The man paused, gathered himself for the rushing attack from behind. Then forward he sprang, quick as a darting weasel.

BUT the leap was no more than half executed when an arm writhed downward, muscled like the body of an anaconda. Sinewy brown fingers closed upon the flying queue. The half-caste was jerked up off his feet like a marionette responding to the twitch of a cord. His knife flew clattering into the scuppers.

Wheeling with lifted gun, the startled Dan witnessed, by the light of his flash, a sight bordering on the supernatural. He saw the half-caste, screaming with fear, rise in midair, partially to disappear atop the deck-house. An instant only the thrashing bare heels were visible. There came the sound of a struggle. The cries came to an abrupt end.

Throwing off the spell of amazement which had gripped him, Dan rushed to the ladder and climbed atop the deck-house. Just behind the funnel he saw the still quivering corpse of the half-caste, flat upon its back. Something terrible had happened to the assassin, almost before Dan's eyes; yet a quick glance about assured him that he was alone with that grinning dead thing. Darting to the rail, he scanned the decks fore and aft, but saw no one. He returned.

Though there was no mark of violence upon the tattooed torso, twined about the neck, like a serpent, was the man's own queue. A cold chill of horror ran through Dan's every nerve, as for the first time he perceived that the queue was *knotted*.

What dread unseen hand had perpetrated this grim deed?

IT had been the work of an instant for Kioga to jerk the would-be murderer aloft and send him into swift insensibility. He was about to return, drop quickly to the deck, take Dan by surprise, and disarm him, when suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a point of light swinging along the shore.

He knew what that meant. The crew were returning, armed with their deadly rifles. In a moment he must be seen, if he remained in this exposed position. Like a flash he was over the rail and down on deck out of sight.

Before Dan had so much as climbed the opposite ladder, Kioga was reëntering the wheel-house and passing aft by the deck-house to the rear companion-way. Down this he went like a bodiless spirit. Entering an after stateroom, whose porthole offered a view of the shore, he watched the approach of the crew toward the point where they had last seen their boat, with Dan on guard.

Above on deck, Dan had also noted the return of the men. He was well aware that the unseen visitor on the *Alberta* had saved his life by killing the pirate who would have knifed him in the back. But that, alone and of itself, was no guarantee that his unseen benefactor was friendly. The act might have been dictated by a wish to avoid discovery. Surely no one with friendly intent would move about in such suspicious secrecy. He must warn the crew to be on guard.

Knowing that Fitzroy understood Morse, he flashed a series of signals with his light, spelling out the word "*Danger*" and repeating it twice. The lantern ashore winked out, as if a cap had been dropped over it. An instant later it blinked an answer:

"*What's up?*"

Dan was signaling again. "*Some one aboard. Come near to catch boat-rope. Caution. Get it?*"

On shore the lantern blinked back, "*Okay.*"

Switching off his light and moving with all caution, Dan went to the off-shore ladder, where he had tied the boat, and hauled it around the stern.

THROUGH the open porthole out which he peered, Kioga watched the curious blinking of the lantern ashore. He saw a figure passing along the moonlit cliff. It caught a coil of rope, cast from somewhere aboard, hauled the boat under the ledge, dropped into it and rowed quietly off in the direction of the

lantern, the light of which was presently extinguished.

A moment later the boat hove into view. He could plainly see the moonlight reflected from the rifle-barrels, which were, he noted, trained upon the ship. Could it be his own presence of which they were aware? Could they have seen him on the bridge?

He turned away from the porthole, intending to make his escape. Then he stiffened with quick realization. He was already too late. In covering the ship, the rifles also commanded the ropes leading ashore. Another quick glance showed him that it was the intention of the crew to board from the landward side, making escape that way impossible. If he took to the water on the seaward side, he would be a perfect target in the moonlight. There were also the sharks from whose jaws only a fool's luck had saved the swimming pirate.

At another time he would have dared the sea, sharks and all, at need. But now he could afford to take no chances. If he were killed, no one on this earth would know where to look for the white girl, locked up in his cave. A hundred years might pass before anyone else came upon that well-hidden sanctuary.

FOR the same reason, he had not exposed himself to Dan. A moment's nervousness, the pressure of a finger, and the girl might perish as slowly of starvation as he would quickly of a bullet-wound.

Could he secrete himself? That too was fraught with risk, for a search would be made as soon as the crew came aboard. Every avenue of escape seemed closed. Already the boat and its armed men were at the ladder.

He thought of the forecastle, then recalled how carefully he had secured its hatch, little thinking that he himself would ever wish to escape by way of the prison-room. A step sounded on the after stair. He moved from the port to the door, like an animal trapped. Was he—the Snow Hawk, survivor of so many close passages with death—to meet his end with clipped pinions in the close confinement of these steel walls?

He did not wish to kill among those attached to the white girl's party. But it must be that or her own life, which hung by a thread, so long as his was imperiled; and he drew his knife. Doors were opening and closing in the passage, as one of the older hands made the rounds

aft. He was grumbling something uncomplimentary about modern youth, starting at shadows, and making extra work for old seamen. He came to the stateroom in which the Indian waited with bared blade.

A few seconds earlier Kioga had dreaded the moment when he must strike. Then his hand rested an instant on the coverlet over the berth. A plan flashed into his mind. His only fear now was that the irritated sailor, out of impatience, would not enter this stateroom.

Still muttering, the man pushed in the door and reached for the wall-switch. But the lights did not flash on, and after a short struggle against something which fell soft and smothering about his head, his thought-processes temporarily ceased.

A MINUTE passed, during which Kioga felt the sailor's struggles diminish and cease. Only then did he switch on the lights and unwind from about his head the coverlet which he had snatched from the berth. He felt the man's heart still beating and swiftly bound a gag across his victim's mouth, against the moment of returning consciousness. Then he transferred the other's capacious greatcoat to his own back. With difficulty he crushed the strange cap down on his own heavy hair. Switching off the lights, he picked up the lantern outside the door and in a moment more was stepping boldly out upon the deck.

Forward the men were assuring themselves that the pirates remained secured. Atop the deck-house he heard voices discussing the strange death of the half-caste. Without haste, but tense with the eagerness to be away, he moved astern, swinging the lantern. He heard a voice call down from above: "Everything shipshape down there?"

Not daring to answer, lest his voice betray him, Kioga continued on his way. There was a moment's silence, heavy with uncertainty, as he felt eyes focusing upon him. Were the guns also upon him—had he aroused suspicion? Then one of the men spoke: "The old boy's mad clean through." Another laughed, and Kioga breathed again.

He came to the ship's tender. His deliberate movements became lightning swift, as in its shadow he began sloughing off cap and greatcoat. Five steps away was the stern line, roving ashore. Almost to it, he saw some one rise half-

way out of the hatch which gave access to the steering mechanism. A voice challenged him sharply.

Whipping the coat forward, he flung it over the sailor's head, muffling the cry of alarm, and with a rapid movement snapped the hatch-cover down, setting one foot upon it. A last glance over one shoulder assured him he was not yet discovered. Then he dropped over the rail, seized the stern rope in falling, and in two seconds had safely swung along its length to shore, and was mounting the rugged cliffs.

Below, he heard the hatch crash open. A shout echoed in the coves, and men came running aft to gather about the gesticulating sailor emerging from the hatch. In the confusion Kioga could not hear what was said; but soon, sharp and clear came Dan's voice:

"Seeing things, was I? Look here!" The beam of his flashlight threw a yellow ring upon the deck. And within the ring, adhering to the freshly varnished surface of the hatch-cover, was something at which they stared—a moccasin. And in Dan's hand was something else, the greatcoat by means of which Kioga had silenced his challenger.

A moment the men stood at gaze, silent and dumfounded, looking upon the only tangible trace of him who had come, moved among them, and gone with the silence of some broad-winged bird of the night, as if cloaked with invisibility.

Throwing off the spell of amaze, a frenzied search began, the length and breadth of the ship. They found the sailor, struggling in his bonds in the after stateroom. But he could tell them nothing of his attacker. In the wheel-house Dan discovered that his note to Kendle was missing. Belatedly he thought to switch on the searchlight, and flooded the cliffs and shore with beam.

BUT he was too late. The Snow Hawk had taken wing and flown. Deep in the forest Kioga was well on his way back to the cave, bearing safe in his belt-pouch the evidence by which to relieve all of the girl's fears as to her brother's safety. But when yet some distance from the cave, there came to him, echoing ominously among the cliffs, the sound of distant drums. And listening intently, he soon could interpret their strange rhythm: war-drums, telling of captive enemies brought home to Hopeka for sacrifice at the stake.

With the next vivid installment this unique novel comes to an intensely dramatic climax.



TYPHOON

*An American runs into hell and high water by way of
a rubber plantation in Annam.*

By WARREN HASTINGS MILLER

"STEAL him, me!" M. Jules Crampon, the manager, laughed hardily as his arm swept the vast domains of the D'Arleux Rubber Estates in Tongking. He was a gay, heartless young devil. Mark Tabor had already sensed Crampon's predatory piggishness; still he turned on him now incredulously.

"You're not serious?" he asked.

"*Oui!* Nothing crude; all perfectly legal! But Juliette D'Arleux is attempting an impossibility here. She is the type to make self-sacrifice for an ideal. It is all a matter of a few cents in rubber."

Mark knew that. He was merely studying rubber, now, with an option on certain lands in the Philippines. But you needed the best and closest management with rubber plantations to glean that few cents on the pound that meant profit. Rubber was a football in the world's markets. A few cents' decline with speculators juggling the price half a world away, meant also the loss of a season's profit here in Tongking.

"You did well to come here, Monsieur Tabor," went on the manager. "Her father, Gaston D'Arleux, was a technician most superb. You will find no lost motion here, no drop of latex lost, no waste in the process! But, I ask you, how can I show a profit when she pays her coolies fifteen piasters the day, instead of ten?" And he gave an eloquent shrug.

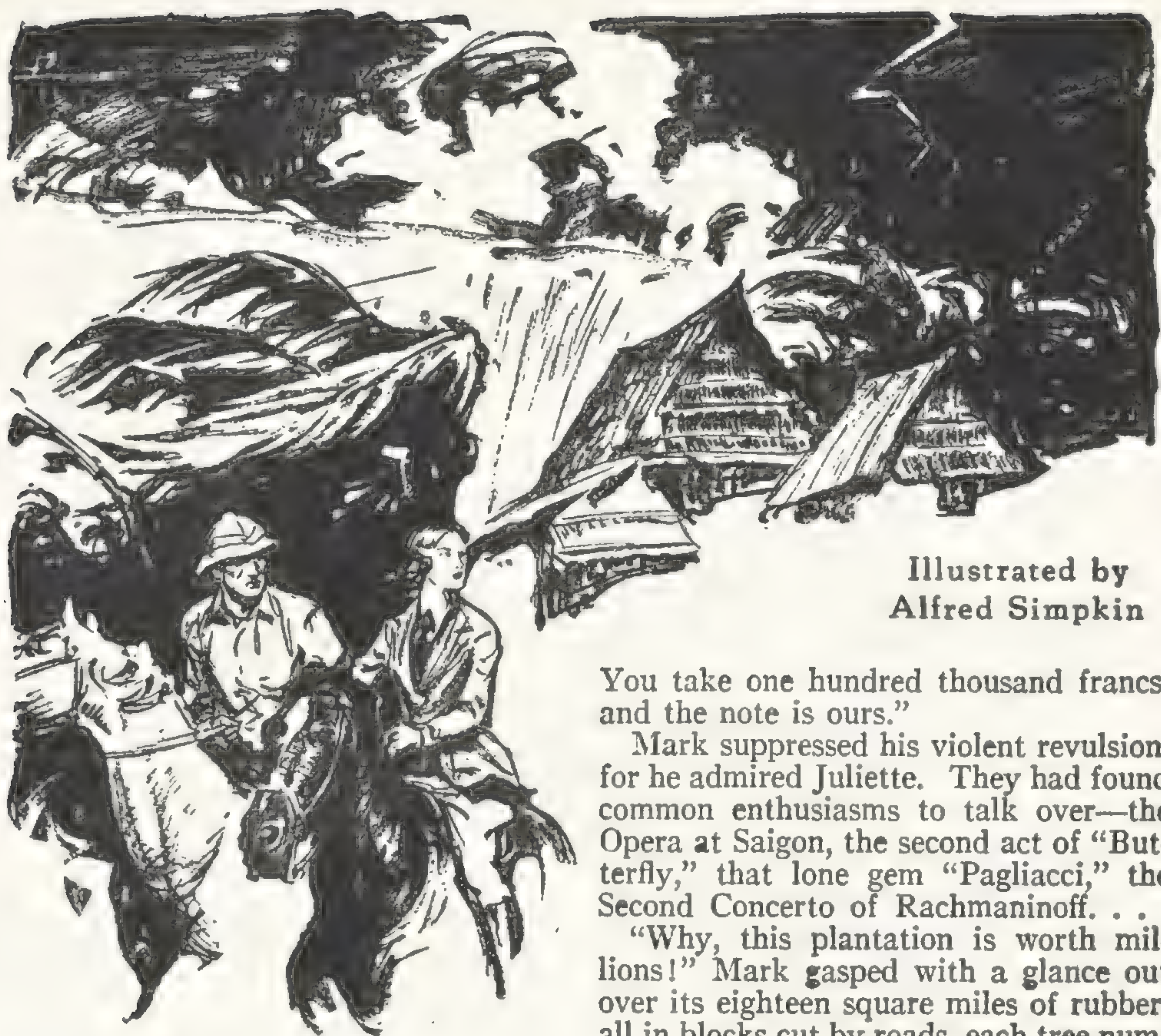
"They look well, these Annamites," said Mark. "Less pinched and woe-begone than on any other plantation I have seen."

"Ah! 'My poor people!' That phrase will be her ruin," Crampon sniffed.

"But ten piasters is not a living wage," Mark persisted, instinctively defending the humanity of his hostess, Mademoiselle Juliette D'Arleux, that vivacious French beauty who was governed by a too-tender heart. "Look at that tapper yonder: He's been up since five o'clock, and has four hundred and fifty trees to tend, I understand."

The Annamite in question was moving rapidly from tree to tree in his block of heveas. The sun glinted on his conical straw hat as flecks of tropical light fell on it through the dark green glossy leaves. He bore a pail having three compartments, and a sharp knife. They watched him cut a fresh slit in the V-shaped scar on the tree and set a cup to catch the white milky latex that oozed out all along the cut. The brown sliver cut off went into one compartment of the pail; drippings on the lower bark and specks of latex on the leaves below were carefully gathered and put into the third compartment for low-grade rubber. Then his dark blue coolie cottons slithered on to the next tree. He had a whole hectare, of two and a half acres, to take care of day after day, from dawn to sunset. D'Arleux Senior had seen to it that not a drop of latex was lost—at ten piasters the day, which was the prevailing rate. His daughter had raised it to fifteen, since the old rate just kept a man alive.

"You see?" said Crampon. "There is the system. One drop lost may mean the few cents' profit. In the process—sheds you will see his pail compartments divided into first-, second-, and third-



Illustrated by
Alfred Simpkin

grade rubber. Just the exact amount of water added, no more, no less; the exact milliliter of formic acid needed to coagulate the prime rubber. Machinery to grind the rubbish out of second- and third-grade stuff. Coagulating trays of exact size to roll out the standard strip of crêpe. Just the exact amount of heat and time to dry the crêpe. Standard presses to bale for shipment. No buyer can find a flaw in our rubber—but of what use is all this refinement, if she pays them fifteen piasters? That leaves her no margin at all; one little disturbance in the market, one little disaster here, and she loses—all.”

“All?” echoed Mark, troubled.

“*Oui!* The bankers in Hanoi, they will carry her for her father’s sake. But unfortunately for her, she also borrowed money from a Jew. And I bought that loan from the Jew—all my savings for half of it, the rest pledged. Look here, my friend!”

He drew out a formidable legal document. “Two hundred thousand francs!” Crampon gloated. “I shall attach the plantation for it. She cannot pay when it comes due. See here, my friend; you are going into rubber—why not join me?

You take one hundred thousand francs, and the note is ours.”

Mark suppressed his violent revulsion, for he admired Juliette. They had found common enthusiasms to talk over—the Opera at Saigon, the second act of “*Butterfly*,” that lone gem “*Pagliacci*,” the Second Concerto of Rachmaninoff. . . .

“Why, this plantation is worth millions!” Mark gasped with a glance out over its eighteen square miles of rubber, all in blocks cut by roads, each tree numbered. A haze of smoke rose in the far distance where Cambodian wood-choppers were clearing more jungle; a shining area of young seedling blocks lay nearer in, with the ground covered with split bamboo to keep down weed expense; young six-year-olds nearly ready for tapping made green dominoes still nearer; then came the blocks on blocks of bearing trees. An enormous plantation, the biggest in French Indo-China; and all over it the genius of Gaston D’Arleux in keeping down his costs.

“It makes no difference,” Crampon retorted. “I attach for a part—and the whole is sold, for what it will bring to satisfy the judgment. It is ours, for she cannot pay. Did you see this in the Hanoi newspaper?”

He drew from his wallet a clipping three days old—a brief paragraph on the October debacle of the stock market in New York. Mark read it with a low whistle. God help the price of rubber, with his country losing billions that would otherwise be spent on new automobile tires!

“Your foolish countrymen!” laughed Crampon. “They turn in a new car for a still newer one—but they won’t do so

now! Come, will you join me? She cannot pay—"

"No!" Mark shouted in fury. "By God it's the most dastardly treachery on the part of a manager I ever heard of! It's legal, is it? All right—I'll 'legal' you, if you want to fight!"

CRAMPON recoiled at this sudden fury. He restrained with an effort the explosion of his own temper at this unexpected refusal, this stalwart opposition. . . . The difference was in their point of view. A woman owning a plantation was to Crampon an anomaly, something to be displaced that business might go on with its usual callous indifference to the human equation. Women were fair game, to be exploited for their love, their money, anything they had. To the American, women were to be protected, made allowances for, given the benefit of their hearts, even if it did interfere with business.

"Aha! You have love for her?" Crampon accused slyly and taking that point of attack from his own logic. "Between us, you are stupid, monsieur, with your refusal! And I warn you she is unapproachable. *Peste!* I have tried it!" He laughed and gave a rueful shrug.

Mark eyed him grimly. "Last thing I'm thinking of," he said. "Any reason I should fall in love with this French girl? I'm just her guest here. If you hadn't told me about this in confidence, I should consider it my duty to warn my hostess about her manager!"

Crampon laughed. "Scrupulous, eh? But you have lost your chance, my friend. *I'll* do the warning! Today I strike. With this—and this!" He tapped the legal document with a venomous forefinger, then the clipping.

Mark turned away; he felt he could not bear to associate further with Crampon; but at least the fiction of being shown around the plantation must be maintained. He cogitated on what he could do, as they went over to the great coolie barracks, with their straight lines of bunks commanded by a headman, armed with a rifle in case of quarrels or gambling. They were virtually three-year slaves, these coolies recruited from the crowded Tongking districts, signed on to the Kumpanie. The elder D'Arleux had allowed no native village here, with its huts for each man set down where he pleased!

Rigid lines of coolies were drawn up outside the barracks for pail-inspection,

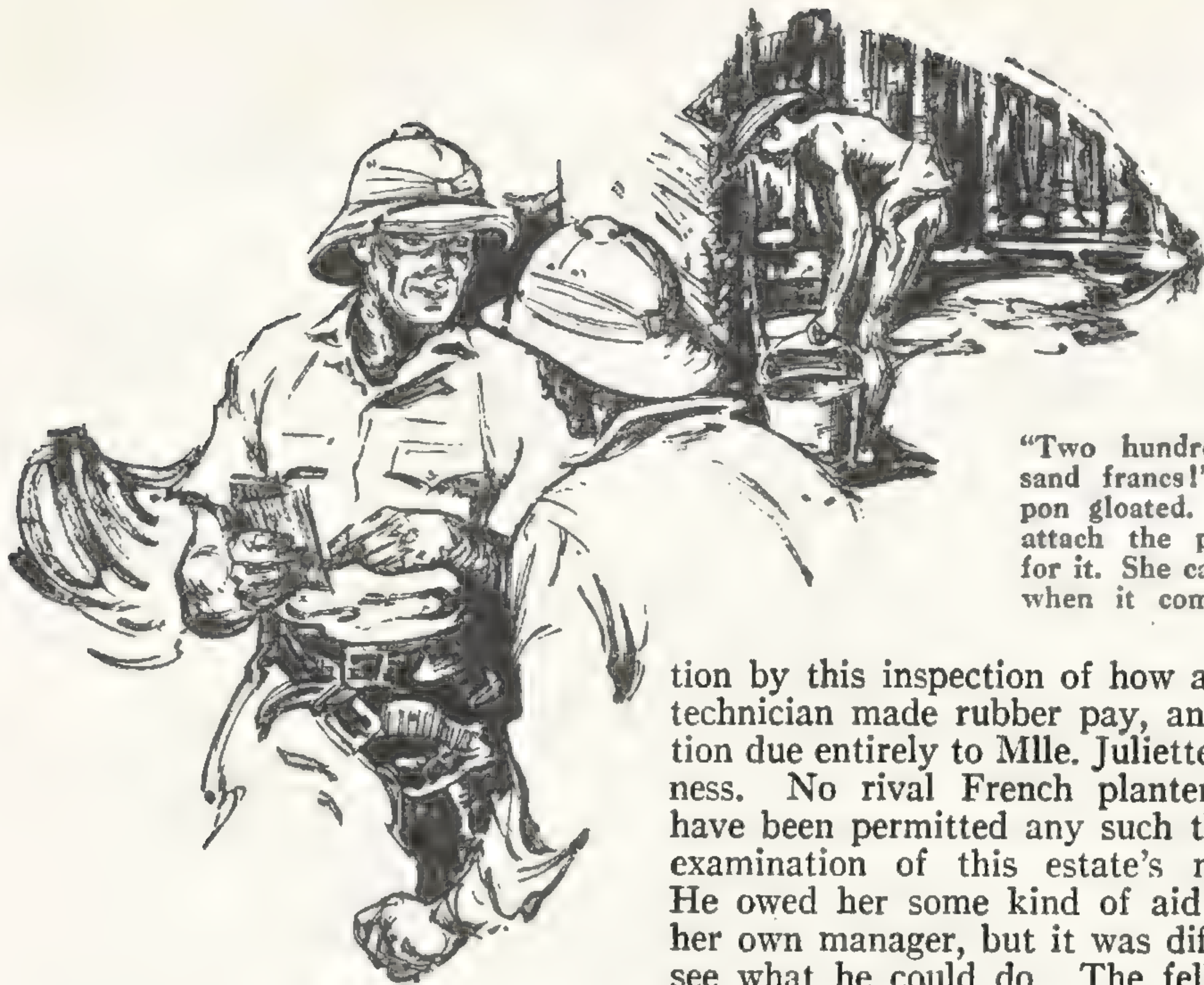
rows of pails, rows of conical straw hats. But the faces under these hats did not look so hopeless and dispirited as on other plantations—due to that fifteen piasters daily wage paid by their generous mistress. "My poor people!" She was up against an economic impossibility here. If Crampon did not get her plantation, the bankers eventually would. They would put in a man here, a hard-boiled receiver who would pay the coolies just enough to keep them fed with rice and fish.

"Typhoon-proof, eh? You note the tile and corrugated-iron construction?" Crampon, showing him the big process-sheds, seemed to have put their disagreement totally out of his mind. Mark nodded. It was the typhoon season now; he might have a demonstration of one if he stayed awhile. Many a plantation had gone down in ruin because its process-sheds were not proof against those mighty winds, but D'Arleux Senior had taken care of that here.

Meticulous care for every penny was apparent inside: The place looked like a chemical laboratory. Long rows of snow-white latex pans, with natives adding water and formic acid to them out of graduated glass chemical apparatus. The workers were garbed in white gowns. Further on, rolls and macerators noisily fed out the white rectangles of rubber into long crêpe sheets and separated the second-grade stuff from bark and leaves.

AROUND on the other side of the world was America—the greatest buyer of this stuff for the millions of cars rolling along her highways. Here was where Mother Nature produced it, aided by the labor of thousands of little brown men. Their homes were in Tongking—huts, small rice-fields; but would they ever get back there? Not on ten piasters the day! Signed for three years, they never got out of debt to the Kumpanie—they remained plantation slaves till they died. It was wrong—and Juliette had the answer. *Her* coolies looked well fed; they could look forward to a return to their homes after three years. If this could only last! But it couldn't—with the price of rubber what it was! Competition—England, Holland, France. . . .

"I have shown all, and now bid you adieu, monsieur." Crampon's polite gesture roused Mark from a reverie. They parted with a certain stiffness on both sides. The manager had done his duty by the guest; but also he had incautious-



"Two hundred thousand francs!" Crampon gloated. "I shall attach the plantation for it. She cannot pay when it comes due."

ly shown his hand, misjudging his man. And no Frenchman will forgive himself that. There was hostility between them as Crampon strode off to his own bungalow and Mark walked down a main road toward the French-Oriental villa built by D'Arleux Senior, a villa of brick pilasters and teak louvers, with a red French tile roof. Mark eyed it, wondering if it also were typhoon-proof. It did not seem so. The astute technician who had founded this vast estate seemed to have stopped with his personal housing—or perhaps it had been built with what material was available during those early days. However, it did not seem to have been damaged much by the many winds that had swept it during previous changes of the monsoons.

MARK had a glimpse of his hostess as he crossed the great central hall, going to his room to dress for tiffin. A dark brunette, with the long oval face of the French aristocrat, she wore the usual hot-country morning dress of flaming silk pajamas that accentuated her petite figure. Her dark glossy hair was meticulously groomed, one foot bare where a Chinese sandal dangled nervously, as she consulted earnestly with her Eurasian head-bookkeeper.

Mark got under his shower, thinking deeply. He had been saved many a pitfall in his proposed Philippine planta-

tion by this inspection of how a master technician made rubber pay, an inspection due entirely to Mlle. Juliette's kindness. No rival French planter would have been permitted any such thorough examination of this estate's methods. He owed her some kind of aid against her own manager, but it was difficult to see what he could do. The fellow was quite legal in his methods. Moreover, he was sure to win, for no bank would help her out, if she persisted in paying her coolies wages which no other plantation would dare pay. She was, in fact, paying them all her own profits, if any. And with rubber prices down to the last cent that competition would allow—Mark frowned perplexedly.

He was putting the finishing touches on tie and cummerbund when the accents of a man's voice penetrated to his room.

"Juliette! *Je t'adore!*" It was Crampon's voice. Mark could envisage him—impetuous, urgent.

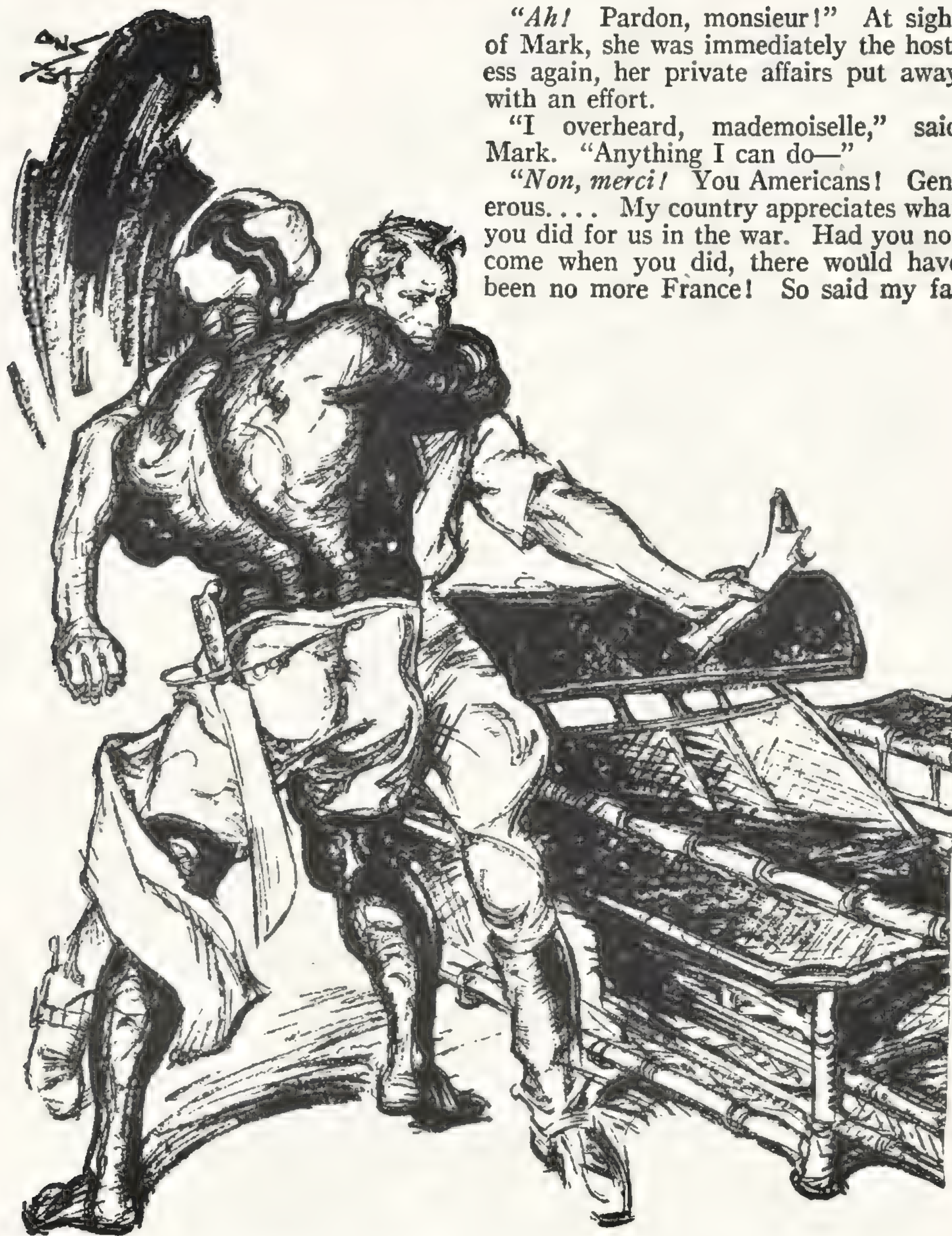
"*Non! Monsieur—je vous en prié!*" he heard her sharp protests.

But Crampon was not to be denied. Mark listened uneasily. He could not intrude on this scene!

"*Monsieur!*" She had evidently repulsed him with force.

"*Non?* Then look at this—and *this*, my lady!" Crampon was threatening now, his tones harsh. Evidently he was showing her the document and the clipping. "Debacle in New York! *Hein?* Look, already a drop of ten cents American in rubber! *Eh bien*, count your loss, mademoiselle! I want my money, *now*—or I serve the warrant!"

Mark quivered as he heard her sob. She had been quick to perceive the disaster contained in that brief clipping. She was a frightened and bewildered woman now.



"Ah! Pardon, monsieur!" At sight of Mark, she was immediately the hostess again, her private affairs put away with an effort.

"I overheard, mademoiselle," said Mark. "Anything I can do—"

"Non, merci! You Americans! Generous. . . . My country appreciates what you did for us in the war. Had you not come when you did, there would have been no more France! So said my fa-

Crampon was quick to take advantage of her distress. "It is nothing, if—*Juliette! Je t'aime—*"

There were sounds of a scuffle and Mark rushed out of his room. But her shriek—"*Si Panah!*" forestalled him as he reached the big living-room on the run. He saw her Laos bodyguard, in his flaming sarong and golden turban, wrenching Crampon from her; roughly the man was rushed out through the door and flung down the veranda steps, in one mighty heave. Juliette fell gasping into a chair, her eyes gorgeous with tears and sparkling with anger.

ther. He was killed—on Armistice Day! *Quelle ironie!*"

Yes; one little shift of Fate, and this girl would not have had to shoulder this vast plantation, thought Mark.

"It is serious, mademoiselle. This news means a long depression in my country—" he began.

"You knew it too?" she interrupted quickly. "Why was I not told? Not that it would make any difference. I am ruined; your country will not buy cars now for a long while."

Mark laughed. "Not so bad as that! Tires will continue to wear out," he re-

mind her. "But it is certain that there will be retrenchment. Fact is, your manager himself told me about it," he went on, determined to lay all his cards on the table. "He wanted me to join him in this scheme to take your plantation away from you. This—"

"*Ah! Misérable!*" She broke out in anger again, anger in which fear was mixed. "Speak not of him!"

"It is necessary, mademoiselle. You need help. I would like to offer myself as manager in his place—till you can get some one more worthy. May I?"

"But you have your own plantation to consider, monsieur," she protested.

"Not at all! Self-interest, if you will, mademoiselle. I need the experience—if it is not too much at your expense," Mark assured her.

"Oh, monsieur!" She was delighted. "On one condition, though—that you do not require me to cut the wages of my poor people. They get all my own profits, really! What does it matter? I live; I have everything. They have nothing, unless I make it so."

The light of womanly tenderness and self-sacrifice was in her eyes now. Thank God she had no corporation behind her! If she chose to renounce the profits that meant dividends to people on the other side of the world—

"Let's see those balance-sheets of your bookkeeper's, mademoiselle, and we will plan what can be done," Mark suggested, and reached out a hand for them.

So he took over the plantation. It was not easy, with that appalling wage-scale! Only the rigid system of D'Arleux Senior enabled her to meet it at all. Of Crampon they saw nothing, but they knew where he was—in Hanoi, obtaining his warrant. It would be served promptly on the date of maturity, Mark knew. And Juliette had nothing to meet it. Mark tried her bankers in Saigon and Hanoi, but they were all alarmed over the depression, now spreading to become world-wide. The price of crude rubber



There were sounds of a scuffle; then Mark saw Juliette's Laos body-guard wrenching Crampon from her. Roughly the man was rushed through the door.

was sagging steadily; already it showed her an enormous loss. And the warrant? Well, there was his own cash capital, and his credit to double that, Mark had resolved. He had it ready. . . .

Two months of soul-racking fighting of her battles. The practical side of the management was easy, and valuable to him; a great work, in which the thousands of Annamite coolies took to Mark as enthusiastically as sullen little Asiatics can. But the financial burden—

"Ah! Those odious little figures—don't let's talk about them; let's talk about Puccini and Gounod!" Child of grace and beauty! Mark was steadily falling under her spell. There were Indo-China nights, with a great moon over the ocean of dark-leaved heveas, when it was hard to remain cool and restrained!

AND then came the irony of good works. A month more had passed under his management; it was now January. The change of the monsoons was bringing dark, scurrying clouds, full of wind, when the barometer dropped out of sight in the glass. And February, the month of the Chinese New Year, was near at hand. . . . One day came a demand from her captain coolie that all her workers go home to celebrate the New Year. They had actually saved money, *that* meant! They were indentured here for three years, but those papers meant nothing. Having the wherewithal, they demanded two weeks to go to their humble huts in Tongking, there to worship their ancestors behind closed doors and begin the New Year with all those rites that were dearer than life itself. Two weeks without any production at all!

Mark felt that this day was somehow heavy with disaster, anyhow, as he fobbed off the coolie captain with an evasion. The barometer had fallen steadily all morning. This day, also, Crampon would appear with his warrant. Pay, or face a sheriff's sale!

"It is the Mem-Tuan who will have to decide, Ya Israng," Mark told the coolie captain and went heavily toward the Ruma Kapal, as the administration villa was called by all the natives. There was a breathless stillness in the air—ominous, and vaguely terrifying to Mark, who knew little about these immense tropical disturbances. The endless acres of heveas hung in listless glistening dark green leaves under a ghastly sky, but high overhead through rifts in that pall

Mark could see shredded white clouds flying headlong with an amazing speed. He quickened his steps. He could not guess when this would strike—but they would all have their hands full, soon enough!

He met her in the living-room, booted and spurred and in riding-habit, though it was morning. Her eyes sparkled with a vivacious fighting eagerness as she turned to him from giving orders to Si Panah, who it seemed took charge of the plantation police-force in times of storm.

"Don't take off your topee, m'sieur," she said. "We must ride to inspect everything. My poor people, they are so negligent! I have ordered your horse."

The syce was outside at the veranda steps with their mounts. Together they rode out over her extensive mileage. A huge Burmese gong was giving out a prolonged and jarring note, repeated endlessly to form one long moaning tone. "Typhoon!" she said. "Each man knows what to do, but we must oversee. The work stops."

Cup-tenders were moving rapidly from tree to tree, emptying the night's latex, stowing the cups in baskets, making no new incisions. At the process-sheds corrugated-iron shutters were going up amid much noise and confusion. In the nurseries men were rolling up sun mats and carrying them off. Everything movable that could be blown away was being stowed and secured with rope. Mark and Juliette clattered up and down the gridiron of roads cutting the plantation into hectare blocks, to see that no section was neglected.

Bong! Bong! Bong! snarled the gong.

"Everybody report for muster!" she said. "They will all be safe in barracks, presently. Time to attend to the villa, my friend!"

MARK had been passive so far, for all this was new to him, a system of procedure devised by the elder D'Arleux from experience of many typhoons. It was like a ship stripping for a storm, this great plantation stripped to its bare trees. A hum of machinery still came from the crêpe rolls, where they were running through the last of the coagulated slabs; but all else was tight corrugated-iron walls, fastened by iron cleats, where had been free and open sides to the usual monsoon breeze. Still the ghastly breathless stillness everywhere, muggy and tepid.

"Ma'mselle, you have two tough ones to face besides this, today," said Mark. "The coolies want to go home for two weeks for New Year. We can't afford it, these days."

"Must we? Oh, m'sieur! It means much more to them than our *Noël* does to us! No rites for one's sacred ancestors—have you seen the little shrines that are all the wealth the poor coolie has, no matter how humble his hut? I have always given them that holiday."

HOW did she manage it? Mark gasped inwardly. Unbusinesslike, to say the least! Yet not so very, if you gave it some subtle figuring. The trees got two weeks' rest; the coolies gave her a grateful loyalty. They did not have to be dragged back by the *gendarmérie*. And they also got two weeks' rest. But it couldn't be done now, with rubber in its present doldrums.

"Not this year," Mark said firmly.

She glanced quizzically at him—then made a *moué* with pursed red lips.

"Mmm! I must think that over. And the other 'tough one,' you said?"

"Have you forgotten this date? Crampon's note falls due, ma'mselle."

"Pouf! How much is it? —Ah! *Cette animal!*" Her eyes sparkled angrily again.

"Two hundred thousand francs," he said brutally. "I've tried everywhere, but nothing doing. I've even cabled Paris. They're all against us. That humane wage scale—unheard-of! They take good care to mention it!"

"Hué! What shall I do?" She wrung her hands, in swift change to fright and despair. She gave one cry; then she glanced ahead and was as swiftly back in the present with its immediate violence and turmoil to be fought. "Here it comes! Hurry!"

A distant thunderous growl from the southwest was the roaring jungle whose hills that way were obliterated in white. Mark urged his horse to a gallop to catch up. The villa rose a quarter of a mile ahead, distinct and sharp against that advancing wall of white. House-boys were running about, slamming doors, gathering in furniture; the second story was grim and enigmatical in its horizontal areas of brown teak louvers. It would stand or it wouldn't—no man could say; that depended upon what force was in this wind.

They stormed through a deluge of white and pelting rain to dash up to the

steps, bending low over their ponies and flinging the bridle-reins to the waiting groom. Mark helped Juliette gain the main door and push it shut against terrific wind-pressure as they turned the lock. Outside was the one vast shout of a monstrous typhoon, in a white fury split by lightning-flashes and muttering a faint roll of thunder. Nothing could be seen of the plantation through the long windows, except a few walls of trees near by, leaning over like withes, all their leaves gathered into one smooth sheaf. The windows bulged inward visibly. From upstairs came the crash of overturned furniture and rabid slatting of ripped jalousie blinds. Juliette's eyes were dark with excitement as she moved chairs and sofas and tables out from under the drip of rain already leaking through the ceiling. Mark felt an insane urge to brace those bulging windows with his own strength; then rationalized it by rapidly pushing against them anything that was solid and had height. He and the girl were in a glass box that seemed alive and breathing in the fury of the tempestuous blasts outside. Cracks began to appear in the plaster covering the tall brick pilasters inside, and Mark eyed them with fear gripping him. His engineering experience was warning him that nothing but reinforced concrete could withstand the enormous wind-pressure on the tile roof.

"Ah, my poor people!" Juliette's cry came, from a rear window. Mark joined her, to look out on an area of small house-boy cabins rolling over and over like dog-kennels, to crash into the nearest wall of trees and be torn to bits among the trunks. He wanted to laugh as he saw How Sin, the fat Chinese cook, blown bodily across the court and pinned flat against the brick wall of the compound. The rest of the house-boys were crawling, prone in the mud but as rapidly as possible, toward the villa.

THE typhoon seemed increasing in force as those muddy human lizards gained the rear veranda. The whole villa shuddered and rocked as if in the grip of an earthquake. Mark saw those cracks gaping wider and was conscious of a distinct curve inward of all the perpendicular pilaster lines. It did not seem possible that an entire house wall could cave in with the force of a typhoon—but if it did there would be tons of tile roof thundering down upon them; they would be buried in a *débris* that

would crush out human life in one hideous moment.

And then—*crash!* a tall double French window tore out of its fastenings and burst inward on its hinges with the clatter of shivering glass. All the terrifying violence of wind and rain outside was now scouring the room in blasts that swept hangings, tapestries, pictures, and small objects into a bewildering whirlwind of flying things.

Juliette seemed possessed with the single thought of protecting her home by struggling with those windows with her own puny strength. Mark helped her, but found himself powerless, unable to so much as stand for one moment in the gap. They tugged at the frames; then he ran to push over her grand piano and its momentum jammed the two halves of the window together with a bang.

"Come, master! The trapdoor! Hasten!" Number One was plucking at his elbow and pointing. Mark gave the pilasters one look. They had now curved sickeningly out of plumb and were a mass of cracks. There was no calling Juliette from the piano, where she was frantically bent on catching in the iron window-keys; he jumped to snatch her off with an arm around her waist, and followed Number One. Back into the hall; there a trapdoor to the cellar below lay open, and hastily Mark carried her down the ladder. It was dark and flooded with water down there—but they were none too soon! A portentous crackling of beams and masonry announced the collapse of those pilasters; then all was the thunder of unimaginable blows, the appalling thump of an entire ceiling smiting the floor, creak and crackle of foundation piers, then the multitudinous snarl of thousands of roof tiles crashing to earth somewhere outside.

JULIETTE clung to him, terrified. He stood knee-deep in water—with the groans and lamentations of house-boys all about in the dark—but he had no intention of letting her get wet. He squatted, holding her, listening to the wind turning those tiles into a bombardment of sharp pattering blows on the compound wall. The house was swept flat. The typhoon roared on over it, tearing away everything movable. They were alive and safe; there was that to be thankful for. . . .

A vast pity for Juliette assailed Mark now—and more than pity. Compassionately his lips pressed her eyelids in the

dark. Her arms tightened about his shoulder convulsively and her lips sought his. They said not a word, not a whisper. But they had found each other. . . . More than he had dared to hope, Mark thought. It had been there in her eyes, but reserved; it had been for him to make the first move. He was glad it had not been with stumbling words. . . .

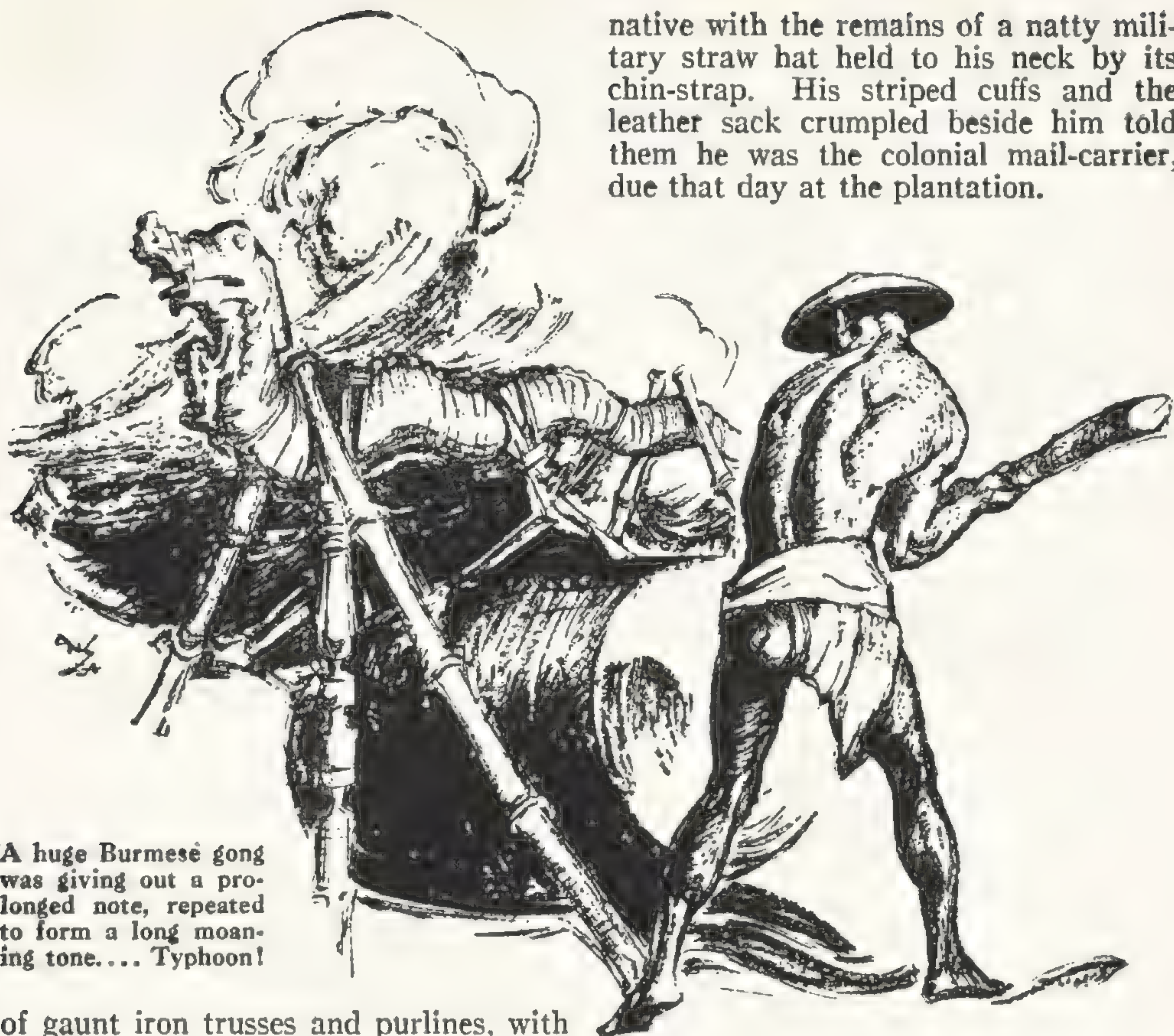
Time passed, while outside the storm raged. "You'll use my money now, won't you?" Mark said, after a while.

"*Non!* It is enough that *I* am ruined. My poor people must go to others—to starve, to fall into hopeless debt—but you shall not be dragged down too. Maybe *le bon Dieu* will intervene!"

BUT Mark had a very dormant piety and was not given to trusting Providence, where business was concerned. He would meet this warrant of Crampon's himself—he had a right to, now—and finish him off as man to man. And then? Well, they would weather the rest of it somehow. He had credit with the bankers, even if she had not. He did not trouble her about it further, for she was happy. When this typhoon blew itself out, they could take up the threads of life together. At present he had her—though in a dark waterlogged cellar, with overhead the ruins of the finest villa in Indo-China. It didn't matter. . . .

It was nearly dark by the time the hour-long unceasing fury outside seemed to have abated somewhat. Mark and the Number One boy worked at the trapdoor. A beam or something was holding it flat. There was probably wreckage piled deep over it, but a hole that a man could squirm through would do. They made such a hole—with a crowbar, among others stored here long ago, by the far-seeing Gaston D'Arleux. People would have to take refuge here some day; well, they would also have to get out!

Mark emerged in time, to a flat and stormy world that pelted rain on him as he braced himself erect, looking aghast over endless ruin. The heavens still stood! That was his first glad stock-taking of what remained to him and Juliette. Stout, healthy trees, scientifically grown and tapped, the typhoon had done little to them but to whip them about. Gray corrugated-iron sheds, in a middle distance of rain, brought another whistle of satisfaction to his lips. Process-works, coolie-barracks, they were still there! A section



A huge Burmesé gong was giving out a prolonged note, repeated to form a long moaning tone.... Typhoon!

of gaunt iron trusses and purlines, with a crumpled mass of corrugated iron jammed in the heveas, told of but one roof torn from its wire fastenings. All around him were prone beams, floors, bricks, a large mass of red tiled roof lodged against the compound wall. A forlorn jumble of wet and broken household goods were a soggy ruin—but that could be mended. The sinews of war were left them! A laugh broke from Mark as a round head with streaming pigtail rose over the compound wall and gabbled at him. The sole human being in sight—How Sin, who had had sense enough to vault over that wall when the roof came down!

"Give me your hands, Juliette," he called down the hole. She could see it now. She would weep over her lost pretty things, but the rest was reassuring. Her hands groped upward; their wrists clasped, and he helped her out. She stood a moment beside him with the single gasp: "*Oh! Quel dommage!*" Then she had left him, to run swiftly to the road, over the débris of the villa. Her quick eyes had spied something that his had not—a figure lying in the mud and weeds by the roadside. This was the first victim to be found—that blue-clad

native with the remains of a natty military straw hat held to his neck by its chin-strap. His striped cuffs and the leather sack crumpled beside him told them he was the colonial mail-carrier, due that day at the plantation.

"*Oh, le pauvre enfant!*" Juliette was working at the chin strap while Mark examined him for signs of life. But he was limp; dead. A blue and jagged wound made by a flying tile told the story. Their eyes met in sympathy over the humble devotion of this obscure Annamite mail-carrier. The mail! Symbol of a civilization remote from this jungle establishment, yet delivered, even at the cost of life!

Juliette composed the body while Mark was opening his sack with the plantation key. Letters, invoices, shipments, bills; a court summons, which he stowed away hastily as a matter between himself and Crampon; the latest copy of the newspaper, folded Frenchwise in a flat strip. He was about to refill the sack when Juliette made a sudden dive for that folded printed strip with its row of news headings in large type. Her eyes dilated as she stared at it—then she had risen with a shriek and was on her tiptoes with her arms flung wildly upward.

"*Saved! Saved!*" she cried. "Oh, my poor people! Ah, *le bon Dieu!*" She cast the newspaper away, as men fling up

their caps in moments of uncontrolled fervor; then she collapsed into Mark's arms.

He held her, mystified, glad for her sake, though reflecting that he was going to have a temperamental little wife; but she was adorable in all her ways.

He released her after a moment—for he could get nothing coherent from her—and went to retrieve the newspaper. And then it was his turn to shout aloud in triumph—for the leading column set forth, in headlines, that the French parliament had just placed a ten percent tariff on American tires, and immediately the price of Indo-China crude rubber had jumped ten percent likewise!

Mark stared at the magic words with rising delight, and relief. People at home would grumble, and Congress would retaliate by a like tariff-increase on perfume or something; but out here it meant reprieve from a deadly low working margin, and a living wage to thousands of hopeless little brown men who did the actual basic work. It was all a matter of a few cents in rubber, as Crampon had pointed out. Well, Mark could fix *him* now, since Juliette was mistress of her own plantation once more, with her credit restored.

She confirmed that as he hastened back to her. She greeted him with luminous eyes. "Take me to the padre now, *mon cher!*" she urged impulsively. "I am Juliette D'Arleux once more. *Ah, que je t'adore!*"

Mark understood. He could do what he liked about Crampon, now that the plantation that was Juliette D'Arleux herself had unlimited credit. Her love was a thing apart, for him alone; distasteful was any thought of monetary obligation to him there—the idealist! They went—with arms about each other's waists, as fatuously as two youngsters in love—past the awakening process-sheds and barracks, where coolies were turning out to resume work, to a secluded grove where rose a small brick chapel presided over by an elderly padre whose living was this plantation. A portentous stillness had followed upon the last blasts of the typhoon, a stillness that dripped with rain from millions of unfolding hevea leaves.

Mark knocked on the chapel door and the old priest welcomed them to his sparsely furnished quarters. It was all the home they had for the present; but that door was the entrance on Life, to Mark and Juliette.

REAL EX-

How a young explorer traveled among and lived with the so-called Blond Eskimos, who had never seen a white man, is here told to Burt M. McConnell—

By

VILHJALMUR
STEFANSSON

My Visit

IT does not happen very often that the first white man to visit a primitive people is welcomed in a dialect that he can understand. Yet that was the case with my two Eskimo companions, Natkusiak and Tannaumirk, and myself when in May, 1910, we visited the so-called Blond Eskimos, camped on the ice between the mainland of Canada and Victoria Island. These people were living in the Stone Age. Neither they nor their ancestors had ever seen a white man. In the year that followed, accompanied by Pannigabluk, our Eskimo seamstress, we visited some thirteen groups, seven of which had never been in direct touch with Europeans. Their sleds were shod with whalebone or a quarter-inch runner of ice. They fished through the ice in winter with a spear, using the canine tooth of a wolf for bait, and jigging it up and down in the water until a fish darted toward it. Unlike the Greenland and Alaska Eskimos, they never used kayaks for hunting seal, but for overtaking and spearing caribou as they swam across a river or lake.

The weapons and many of the knives of these primitive people were made of native copper. That is why I have always called them the Copper Eskimos; the term "Blond Eskimos" was the invention of a newspaperman, to stress the blond characteristics of some of them.

My Eskimos and I left our base camp on the north coast of Canada late in

PERIENCES

Truth may not be stranger than fiction, but frequently it is fully as interesting. In this belief we offer each month prizes for the best five stories of Real Experience submitted. (For details of this prize contest, see page 3.)



to the Stone Age

April, 1910, with a dog-team and sled. We traveled along the shore to the eastward, hunting as we went along, and averaging about fifteen miles a day. There was no hurry, as we expected to spend the summer wherever it overtook us. We had rifles and ammunition and two weeks' food-supplies. The Eskimos made and broke camp, harnessed and unharnessed the dogs, and did the cooking. I provided the party with fresh meat.

We had been traveling almost three weeks when we came upon signs, along the south shore of Dolphin and Union straits, that made our hearts beat faster. On a piece of driftwood we found the marks of a dull adz; at another place we found chips.

We were up early the next morning, and all that day saw signs of a strange people. Some of the signs were comparatively fresh, and others several months old. The following day we found human footprints in the crusted snow, and sled-tracks that were not more than three months old. Continuing eastward, we came upon a deserted village of more than fifty snow-houses. Apparently their inhabitants had left them about mid-winter, and it was now the 12th of May.

The size of the village surprised us greatly; fifteen houses constituted the average Eskimo group, and here were fifty or sixty. A broad trail, drifted over with snow but easy to follow, led northward across the level ice. It did not take

long for me to make up my mind to follow it. Tannaumirk at first asked to be left behind; then the thought that he might be killed in his sleep by these strange people caused him to change his mind. So we left only the seamstress, Pannigabluk, to take care of the camp.

In less than two hours of northward traveling we brought up to another deserted village; this showed signs of having been occupied to within the last two months; the trail was getting warmer. It was evident that the group had split up and was moving about on the ice.

With my binoculars I picked up three seal-hunters to the westward. They were about three miles distant, and we headed the dogs in their direction. The nearest hunter was about half a mile from his nearest neighbor. He would be frightened if we all swooped down upon him. We therefore stopped the sled several hundred yards away, and Tannaumirk volunteered to advance and make the man's acquaintance, as his Mackenzie River dialect was likely to be similar to the hunter's.

The Eskimo sat motionless on his block of snow, presumably beside a seal's breathing-hole, waiting for the creature to push upward an ivory-tipped indicator as he came up for air. He was aware of our presence, yet he made no sign. Through the glasses I watched my Eskimo approach. The sealer would watch the seal-hole steadily for a time,

then cast a quick glance toward the advancing Tannaumirk. He held his spear in one hand, ready for any emergency.

Finally, when Tannaumirk was within five yards, the sealer jumped up, whipped out a long-bladed knife, and struck an attitude of defense. Naturally, this scared Tannaumirk rather badly, as he admitted afterward, but he stood his ground and began to explain that we were men of excellent character and peaceable intentions. The stranger then began something that was neither chant nor song; it was merely a noise, made with every breath, to ward off dumbness. For it was the belief of the Copper Eskimo that a man in the presence of a spirit must make a sound with every breath or he would be stricken dumb—and he considered Tannaumirk a spirit. In the first place, as he explained later, our Eskimo had not used the peace sign of his people, which was to hold out the hands to show that he did not carry a knife; then, he had never seen such elaborate dog-harness, sled and equipment.

AFTER several minutes of frantic conversation on Tannaumirk's part, the sealer began to listen, and then to reply—in a dialect that our Mackenzie River Eskimo could understand! Tannaumirk then lifted his coat to show that he carried no concealed weapons; the sealer advanced, and ran his hands over our Eskimo's body and arms. Assured by this examination that he was dealing with a human being, and not a spirit, he told Tannaumirk that we might follow them—at a distance—to the village. Just before reaching it, we were to halt until our status could be established.

At the village itself, all was excitement. As soon as our host could make himself heard above the barking of the dogs, he announced us as visitors from a great distance, who had come with no evil intentions.

Immediately the whole crowd of forty or more people surged forward. As each man came up, he would say: "I am So and So. I am well disposed toward you. I have no knife. Who are you?" Upon being told our name, and assured that we likewise carried no knife and were inclined to be friendly, he would stand aside for the next in line. The women then retired to their respective homes to prepare a meal.

When the women had disappeared, the men asked where we would like to have our snow-house built, and we selected a

spot about two hundred yards from the village, where we could keep our dogs from fighting with theirs. They built the house, furnished it with skins and a seal-oil lamp, and announced that we were welcome to remain with them as long as a piece of seal meat remained in their larders; that they would declare a holiday, for this was the first time their people had ever been visited by strangers from so great a distance that even their country was unknown.

Etiquette prescribed that we be entertained at different houses. My host was the man who brought us to the village. His house was about seven by nine feet. His wife was a kindly and hospitable soul, who was much concerned about my comfort. Could she not take off my seal-skin boots, and dry them over the lamp? And meanwhile, would I not put on a pair of her husband's socks? Did I like my seal meat with blubber or without? Did I like the blubber raw or cooked?

Some steaming pieces of seal meat lay on a side table. My hostess picked out for me the choicest morsel, squeezed it firmly between her hands to make sure nothing would drip from it, and brushed off the pieces of coagulated blood that adhered to the meat. As I was a special guest, the husband went through the same motions, and made sure that I really had been given the best piece. The woman then gave me her own copper-bladed knife, with which to cut the meat. The next most desirable piece she handed to her husband, and the others in turn to the children.

During the meal presents of food were brought from the other houses; each platter contained something special for me, and one family sent an urgent invitation to breakfast. After the meat course came one of blood soup, which is made by pouring cold seal blood into the boiling broth and stirring briskly. We drank about a quart from cups made of musk-ox horn. Then we lounged back upon the caribou and musk-ox skins.

THESE simple and hospitable people showed the greatest delicacy in asking questions and answered mine quite readily. They offered to send a dog team to bring Pannigabluk, and urged us to spend the entire summer with them. They did not have permanent houses, I learned, but moved from place to place. One group would subsist chiefly on polar bears during the winter, another on fish; and my hosts, of the Akuliakattagmiut,

chiefly on seals. Their fishhooks were made of copper, and had no barbs. They cooked with seal-oil lamps and stone pots. The women's forks were made of caribou antler, their water-pails of seal-skin, and their shallow platters of wood. They lit their seal-oil lamps by knocking two pieces of iron pyrites together above a bit of pussy-willow fuzz, which was used for tinder.

There may have been thefts among these people, but we never heard of one. Nor was there a word for stealing in their language. Whether or not they exposed girl babies—*i.e.*, snuffed out their lives soon after birth by placing them on a snowbank and allowing them to freeze to death—we did not learn. But we concluded they did, from the fact that there were nineteen men and only ten women at the first camp.

These Copper Eskimos wore coats of caribou skin, with the hair out; and shirts of fawn-skin, with the hair next the body. Their beds of skins were spread on willow twigs to keep them from contact with the snow. That evening they saw for the first time the lighting of a sulphur match.

When we went over to the new snow-house, we found about thirty people inside. They did not stay long, however, as they realized we were in need of rest. We were not offered temporary wives, which had in former times been the Mackenzie Eskimos' idea of common courtesy, according to Tannaumirk.

Next morning, our host of the day before approached us—slowly, and singing at the top of his voice, so that we might have ample warning of his coming. We asked him many questions. Did he not, for example, consider it strange that my eyes were blue and my beard a reddish brown? Not at all, he assured us; they were much like those of some of their neighbors to the northward. In fact, his description of these people, the Haneragmiut, led me to think that they might possibly be descendants of some of the lost men of the Franklin expedition. Then and there it was arranged that we pay these blond and blue-eyed natives a visit. For a full-blooded Eskimo is no more likely to have blue eyes and brown hair than a Chinaman or an American Indian.

Later in the morning I got out my rifle and fired at a stick set up at a distance of two hundred yards. They had never heard the report of a rifle, and all the women and children ran into their houses.

The men ran behind a snow-wall, and began talking excitedly; they were afraid this strange weapon would frighten the seals from that vicinity. In fact, the bullet-hole through the wood impressed them far less than the noise, and they were distinctly disappointed when I was forced to admit that my rifle would not kill caribou on the other side of a mountain. It was the same with my binoculars. They could search out caribou that could not be seen with the naked eye, but they could not see into the future and tell when and where the next herd would appear, so that the Eskimo hunters could lie in ambush. Their medicine-men, they assured me, could tell these things in advance.

I TOLD them at another time of the marvels of modern surgery: how a surgeon could put a patient to sleep, and remove a bone or an organ; that the patient would feel no pain and would not know what had happened. All he would have to show for the operation, I explained, would be the scar. Our surgeons could even transplant an organ from one body to another.

To them, this did not border on the miraculous, for one of their medicine-men had convinced them that he had removed the entire spinal column of a man who suffered from backache, and had replaced the vertebræ with an entirely new set. Moreover, we were assured, he had done it without leaving a scar. He had installed a new and sound heart in another Eskimo. In fact, the things they could tell of their medicine-men were more marvelous than the things I could tell of mine. . . .

A few hours before our departure, the group staged a dance. One of the songs had a rhythm that reminded me of the ancient Norse skaldic poems, and the girl who sang it was herself fair, for an Eskimo, and had the long, slim fingers that I had seen only among half-bloods in Alaska.

At this season, the middle of May, there was no darkness at midnight, and on the evening of the third day we set out to visit the people to the northward. After traveling about sixteen miles we came upon four inhabited houses. Our guide, a member of the first group, went forward and acted as our sponsor. Everything then went much as it had gone at the first village. There were nine men and boys to greet us, and in spite of their Eskimo clothing, they looked very like

Europeans. There were three men whose beards were almost the color of mine, and who looked like typical Scandinavians. One of the women had the delicate features one sees in some Scandinavian girls. One of the men had a dark brown mustache—something I had never seen among the Mackenzie River or Alaskan natives. Another looked like a Portuguese, and had slightly curly hair. Most of the women were tattooed, with lines down the middle of the forehead and chin, and others on the cheeks, but the men were not. As in the first village, we could make ourselves understood from the beginning.

HERE were not remains of the Stone Age, such as archæologists find in river gravels or prehistoric caves, but the Stone Age itself. These people had standards of honor, friends, and families; they loved their wives, were gentle to their children, and considerate of the welfare of others. They differed little from your people or mine. Later, at a larger village, I could not persuade a single individual to pose for a photograph, nor would one man with auburn hair trade a lock of it for one of my own. I then tried to buy a lock, and this caused considerable criticism.

It has been suggested that these Copper Eskimos are descended from possible survivors of the Franklin expedition. As it happens, Franklin's entire company of 129 men perished in the general neighborhood of Victoria Island. But had they all survived, and had they married Eskimo women, their descendants could not have been numerous enough to give us the great number of men and women with European characteristics. In a year I saw some seven hundred of these people. Of this number ten or more had gray eyes. Some of the men had pulled out the hair on their faces, but many had brown beards, ranging from light to dark. Others had dark brown and rusty red hair, and more than twenty-five per cent of the entire population had eyebrows ranging from a dark brown to a light brown.

Where did they get these characteristics? Can they be accounted for historically? Why did they look so much more like Europeans than other Eskimos if they were not of European descent? They have not had, in recent times, such contact with white men as could change their physical type. The Eskimos of western Alaska have been more than a

hundred years in contact with Europeans, since the early Russians. For more than fifty years they have been in contact with the American whaling fleet, numbering at times as many as a thousand men. A good many of the whalers have married Eskimo women, and their children and grandchildren have married Eskimo women and raised families, yet all this mixture of races has produced no such blond type as we find in Victoria Island.

To understand the historic possibility of European contact with the Copper Eskimos, we must go back into history almost a thousand years:

In the year 982, Eric the Red, outlawed from Iceland, discovered Greenland and landed on the southwest coast. Returning at the end of his exile, three years later, he advertised his discovery so successfully in Iceland that in 985 a fleet of twenty-five vessels sailed for Greenland. Fourteen of the ships got through, and may have carried as many as six hundred colonists. By the Twelfth Century the Greenland colony may have had a population of from three to ten thousand. Shortly after the year 1341 the northern colony was lost from history. The last reliable account we have from the southern colony dates from the first years of the fifteenth century. Finally a combination of circumstances cut off all communication between Norway and Greenland.

In 1577, Martin Frobisher, a British mariner, landed in Greenland; the Norse colony had entirely disappeared, and the country was inhabited by Eskimos. Did the colonists intermarry with the Eskimos of Greenland? Many probably did.

It is not likely that the entire European colony of Greenland was wiped out. Some of them at least could have migrated westward by sleds or boats to the mainland of North America, which had been discovered by Leif Ericsson, son of Eric the Red.

THERE is no reason for being certain that the so-called Blond Eskimos of Victoria Island are descended from the Icelandic colonists of Greenland, but there is no reason why they might not be. Greenland is not far from Victoria Island, and the Eskimos are inclined to mix with any race with which they come in contact. If the Copper Eskimos *are* of European blood, then the Greenland colonists furnish not only an explanation, but the only historical explanation.

Ten Years in the Foreign Legion

An Iowa boy carries on his story of fighting for the Tricolor to the dearly bought victory in Syria, and tells of an American comrade's desertion. . . . As told to Charles Dutton—

By ORVAL
CHENEVOETH



ALL day long a steady stream of reinforcements poured into that little town—troops of all kinds: Senegalese with their rifles, and always their big knives—horrible things, like a butcher's cleaver, sharpened to a razor edge; more than once an enemy lost his head by one of these knives. It seemed that France was sending an entire army. But we were the heroes of the occasion.

We must have been odd-looking heroes. Our uniforms were a mass of dirt. My pants had no seat—and I was not alone in this. But we were heroes. Six hundred of the Legion had withstood almost five thousand Druses. We had killed more than our entire number. We had suffered. There was not a company of the five but had half of its men killed or wounded.

The entire battalion of five companies had been honored by being cited by General Serrail. And the Twenty-ninth—they had an honor citation all their own. Later, because of this battle and others, we were given the right to wear the fouragère, a cord of scarlet and blue which is flung over the right shoulder. It is given only for special service. When it was awarded us we were told that when we left the service we could still wear the decoration. As a rule this is not done. . . .

The village was destroyed. All the houses were knocked to bits. It was to be a lesson to the natives. Strange to say, little loot was found. One lieutenant, whom we called Fritz, did make a haul. In a house he found a number of rugs. He managed to ship them to

France, and we heard later they were worth almost twenty thousand dollars.

I think we stayed four or five days at Mousseifré after the battle. Our companies were depleted and we had to wait for new men to bring them to their original strength of a hundred and twenty. There was little to do. During the time, we got even with a common enemy, *Adjudant-chef* Michaud.

Michaud had come into Syria with the first regiment of regular French troops. He was in charge of a depot of supplies in Damascus. For some reason he had no love for Legionaries; again and again he had refused to sell us wine or cigarettes.

Several days after the battle, a group of Legionaries found Michaud walking out in the desert, alone. It was an opportunity not to be lost. They seized him, dug a hole in the sand and buried him with only his head showing. One hour later he was found and released. Twice in the next two days the thing was repeated. Weeks later I met him in Damascus, at the head of a depot. He loved the Legion then!

We discovered the reason for all the troops. There was to be another attempt to relieve Suweida, long besieged by the Druses. When we heard it, we were glad—for we were tired of inaction, and tired of smelling the rotting bodies of our foes on the sand. Glad, also, be-

cause of a remark made by General Gamelin, who was in command. He had been asked if he thought it was possible to relieve Suweida. He shrugged: "Give the Foreign Legion two quarts of wine apiece, wait thirty minutes, and they will take it themselves."

He knew us. A few days later the Legion took Suweida. But it required forty minutes.

SUWEIDA had been besieged for over three months. We heard the garrison was not badly off for water, but had little food. When General Michaud's army was cut to pieces, the Druses had captured a number of big guns. These they had used daily. Only the fact they did not know how to use the shells of the guns saved the town. The shells never exploded—only made holes in the roofs of the buildings.

We looked like a regular army when we started for Suweida: soldiers, horses, guns galore, and the Legion. All day—for we started at four in the morning—we marched up hill and down. There was a sort of road, but it was mostly rocks. Cannon got stuck; we pulled them out. Horses got frightened—we encouraged them to move on. We sang—and above all expressed our opinion of the regular troops. Yet there was no reason to sing. We ourselves were loaded down like the horses.

Each man carried a heavy pack. Besides that, we had pieces of tents, gun and bayonet, our musettes, blanket and the water-bottles. For every four men there were three bottles of water, and one of what they called coffee. And the day was hot, the sun like a flame.

In late afternoon the cavalry found themselves in trouble. We were on a mountainside then. As soon as the Druses began to fire, the Legion was sent forward. The enemy were on top of the hill, above us. They were hiding behind rocks, and though we put up a good fight, we did not do much damage. Then the French brought up big guns, and in a few minutes they blew off the top of the hill. That halted the Druses for the day.

It was almost dark when this was over. Marching a little farther, we camped in a little ravine. Then we had to build walls on all the hills that surrounded the place. Once, twice, three times we built walls. Each time some one decided we'd better build a wall on a higher hill. There was not much trouble that night; the Druses kept firing

from the surrounding hills, but they had little luck.

We started next morning at dawn. In an hour we saw Suweida. It stood on the top of a hill, and behind it were the mountains. There was a square fort, three or four stories high. On its highest point the flag was flying.

It did not take long to finish this job. The Druses made one last attack, and for a few moments there was heavy firing. But our machine-guns drove them off. Then, to make certain, we charged after them. But they were running, and all we could do was fire at their fleeing backs. Then we marched into Suweida.

There were a little over three hundred men there. About eighty had been killed. The town was damaged a good deal. All the buildings had holes in their roofs. But the thing that surprised me most was an automobile which came out to meet us. In it, dressed as if he had come out of a bandbox, was a French captain.

We discussed that automobile many nights. Suweida was only a little outpost in the hills. How an automobile could cover those rough trails they called roads, and ever reach the place, we could not understand. But it was there. The next day I saw a woman riding in it. She was the wife of an officer.

We were glad to hear that the army authorities had decided to abandon the village. As we marched away, the Legion was the rear guard. We knew what was going to happen. Soon it came. The thunder of an explosion. First one, then another, then others. Every building was being blown up. No one would ever besiege the place again.

THIS blowing up of an abandoned post is a common practise. In Morocco, where the Legion has solitary outposts hundreds of miles in the desert, it is understood the fort must never fall into the hands of the enemy. In the center of every one of these forts is a pit, where ammunition is stored. It is wired. If the officer in command cannot hold his fort, he is expected to turn the switch and blow it up. Fort, officers and men all go up in sound and smoke.

We had no trouble on the way back to Ghazalé, which was a great military camp now. And at Ghazalé we had a little rest. There was an English officer visiting General Gamelin. One evening there came the sound of loud voices, oaths, curses. Then it seemed as if an

army had gone into battle. Astonished, the English officer asked:

"What is all this confusion?"

General Gamelin shrugged: "The Legion is relaxing."

After a while, of course, the officers had to take the men in hand. There had been several fights in which a soldier while drunk had struck his superior. If there is one rule which is obeyed in the Legion, it is that an officer cannot strike a soldier, except in self-defense. All the wild stories of soldiers being strung up and flogged, or struck down by the sword of an officer, are untrue. It's not done. The officers are hard; they drive the men; but they are just. Besides, an officer who was cruel would not last long: he would be found with a knife in his back.

AFTER all we only stayed in Ghazalé a few days. Evidently the officers decided rest was not good for us. We started out again. We never knew our destination, but we could always tell the sort of an expedition by the rations issued. If it was a six-day biscuit ration, with soup-tablets and cans of *singe*, we knew we were in for trouble. *Singe* was a sort of tinned meat. Just what it was I never discovered; it tasted like nothing else on earth; and we were firm in the belief it was monkey flesh.

We were not alone on this expedition. We were part of a column. There were *tirailleurs*, cavalry and artillery. And there were camels—hundreds of the beasts, carrying water. We were going out in the desert to punish and destroy the villages that had revolted.

These villages were little places—mud houses in most cases. Most of them we found deserted. We would destroy the houses—set on fire what we could, blow up others. Sometimes, of course, they would not be deserted. There would come rifle-shots, and then ahead of us we would see a few riders dashing away.

There were casualties, of course. Each night we had to build the usual walls, and the guards were doubled. At night the enemy would try and creep into our camps. If they did, it meant death. On these raids they used their knives. I saw what was left of three *tirailleurs* who had fallen into their hands. It was not a pleasant sight. Their heads had been cut off; and there were other mutilations I cannot mention. We decided that the Druse women had worked on them. The men will cut your throat, slash off a

hand. Only the women would have done what had been done to these men. Some of it must have happened while they were still alive.

We went on for some days, swinging in a wide circle. I think what hurt most of all was the fact that after we ran out of cigarettes, the Druses captured the convoy which was coming to us. It carried our pay. That was of no importance. We could not spend it. But they got the cigarettes. Also they killed all the guard.

And we began to run out of food. I never was a mule-driver, but on this campaign I did eat mule. Some one decided that a mule would be as good eating as a horse or a cow. We killed one, and cooked the pieces with the native onions. I remember the onions tasted fairly well.

We started to march to Mezra. It was here that General Michaud had lost his four thousand men. And we had no sooner started to march when we ran into one of the hottest fights of the year. It was like this:

The column marched along. On each side of us were low hills. On their crests were the Druses. They were in a sense fighting a rear-guard battle, but we were also the French rear-guard. It was the Legionaries who had to stand off these attacks so the column could move ahead.

A group of eight, ten or a dozen would be given a machine-gun. We would hide behind a stone or any shelter we could find. It was our duty to hold off the enemy. Sometimes we would hold a station for almost an hour. By then the column would be far ahead. Then we would pick up the machine-gun and run and join them. A few moments later we would do it all over again.

WE reached a village, whose name I forget; suddenly it became a real battle. The column had to pass through a narrow valley; the Legion companies were holding down little stations on the tops of the hills, and most of us were without shelter of any kind; for some unknown reason, at the wrong time, the hills had run out of rocks.

No one who ever fought the Druses will deny they had courage. They are a fanatical race, believing that fate has picked out for them what lies ahead. They were without fear, and would fight against overwhelming odds. And they hated us with a rage beyond belief.

This battle was a mixture of attacks by their horsemen and by men on foot.

In a fight of this kind, you only know what happens to your own group. What happened to mine was plenty. Without shelter, exposed to fire from three sides, we could see the column below us. They were having trouble. And so were we. For the first time the Druses were using hand-grenades. Where they got them we never knew. We would see them land; before they exploded, we ducked. Luckily, the powder must have been poor, for they did little damage.

We beat the enemy off after a while, but there were a good many killed. A soldier by my side was hit four times. First, it was in the arm, next his foot, then his shoulder. Finally, while he was swearing, there came a silence: a bullet had struck him between the eyes.

The column got out of its valley. For some reason no one gave our company any orders to move. We had been told to hold our posts, and that meant they would be held until we were ordered off. For a while it seemed as if we had been forgotten; then came orders to move. We were glad to get away. There was one result of this battle—the commander that night, in an order, declared the Légion had saved the column.

BUT there had been many casualties. Some of the stories seemed incredible. There had been wounded we had been forced to leave behind. As a rule these—if they can do it—shoot themselves. It is better than falling into the hands of the Druses. One sergeant, an arm shattered to bits, kept firing with his one hand, until a grenade took that hand off. Everywhere we heard stories of that sort.

We were hungry—nothing uncommon in this; I never saw a fat soldier in the Legion. We were supposed to have our emergency rations—half a bar of chocolate, a can of *singe* and a few beef tablets with which to make soup; but these were gone. We were tired—not from the marching and fighting; we were used to that. But we had carried our heavy packs, and our overcoats. Some fiend must have invented the overcoats. We took them everywhere we went, and there was only one way to carry them: you had to wear the things. Marching under the summer heat in the desert, wearing an overcoat, is not pleasant. One use only we had for them: we did sleep in them. In winter we had one blanket.

We rested a night or two. Then we went to Mezra. I wanted to see this

place. After I saw it, I wished I hadn't. It was here General Michaud had been defeated, his four thousand cut to bits, the wounded tortured. It was a level spot, with hills around it. Even when we got there, months afterward, there were the remains of the dead lying on the ground. Bones were everywhere.

"Look!" a sergeant said.

He pointed to a low stone wall. The wall was one of the reasons the army had been defeated. It was so low that the Druses had swept over it on horseback. Within were the remains of perhaps a hundred men, bones and flesh mingled in confusion.

"See! When you slack on your walls, remember what happened here," said the sergeant. "Those bones were once men. Once they drank and loved."

We were sent back to Mousseifré the next day. From there we went to Ghazalé. Again we were issued new suits, could wash and shave. Then we were ordered to Damascus.

Damascus was not a pleasant place at that time. The French were having lots of trouble in the crowded Druse section of the city. Day after day the snipers picked off soldiers. It was like a besieged town. On every corner were machine-guns. Wire blocked off some streets. Others had stone barricades built across them. All were unsafe, by day or night. Night was the worst of all. Then the Druses slipped into the city, and sniped at every Frenchman they saw, soldier or civilian.

We were part of a battalion which was ordered to clean out the gardens surrounding the city. We went all around the place. We were under constant fire. Many of our men were killed. But save for six natives we found carrying arms, we had no luck. We disposed of the natives. Stood them up and shot them. But though there must have been hundreds of the Druses in those gardens, we never found them. They shot at us all day, and we could do little in return.

We had three days of this, then several days' rest.

I CANNOT describe the sort of fighting we went through. We marched all day, and most of the nights. All the time we were under fire. And rarely did we see who was shooting at us. You would be marching along, and suddenly the dust at your feet would leap upward. The bullet had missed you. You would speak to a man, and the next second he

would fall at your feet. It went on all the time. Our company was down to about seventy. Got down to sixty. We slept on our arms when we slept at all. It was savage warfare.

We heard later that the outside world got rather excited at the way the French cleaned up Damascus. But what could we do? It was our lives or theirs. And the outer world never knew just how close to utter collapse were the French in Syria. Horrible as was all the fighting, there was no alternative. We had to kill, or be killed.

ALL this took place in the summer and late fall. Winter was at hand, Christmas coming. We had an idea that after the horrible last six months we might be given a rest. But instead, we were ordered out into the desert, to occupy a post. Worse, we were to build it; that would be back-breaking work.

And we heard another thing. We had blown Suweida to bits. But the Druses had rebuilt it, refortified it. Sylvestre expressed what we all thought.

"Hell!" he said. "We will have to take it all over again!"

He was right. About three months later, the Legion again captured Suweida, for the last time.

We marched to our new post. We did have mules on this expedition, hundreds of them. They carried the supplies and building material. First we marched through the gardens outside of the city. We were under constant fire but we could not see our foes.

We ended our march at Chuba. There was one building there. In this farmhouse we made our quarters. There was a great wall enclosing the building. We had to take the old wall and build a new one half its size. It took days. But it completely circled the farmhouse.

There were a few outhouses made stronger. In these we slept. Loop-holes had been made in their walls. Our guns were placed at the head of our beds. Again and again we had to leap to our feet, seize the guns and rush to the loopholes. Besides the Twenty-ninth, there were a large number of blacks. They had to do the heavy work.

Because there was a stream near by, caravans on the way to Damascus passed daily. Our duty was to search every bag and package for weapons.

Once a week a plane would fly over us, bringing mail. On Christmas day it brought us a newspaper, an American

newspaper—and one item in it made conversation for many nights. In it was an item about the French occupation of Syria. Some American peace society, made up of women, had passed a resolution, censuring the French for their treatment of the Druses.

I suppose those women would have been surprised to hear that their resolution was talked over in a lonely Legion post in Syria. It was discussed in ironic language. Outside lay the desert, the foe. We were cut off from the world. We thought of what we had gone through.

"*Foutre!* Those women! I would like to take them on a walk round the gardens of Damascus!" Sylvestre observed.

We were relieved at last. When the column arrived from Damascus it brought its dead with it. They had fought every inch of the way. For some reason it was decided to abandon the post. There hadn't been any caravans for some weeks. As we marched away, there came a great explosion. The post at Chuba had been blown to bits.

We were next sent to a former British camp, unused since the World War.

HERE we heard we would be included in the new expedition against Suweida. We heard something else: The Legion always bury their dead after a battle. They are placed in a grave five feet deep. We had done this at Suweida. Now that the Druses had rebuilt the fort, they had dug up the bodies of our comrades and scattered them all over the hillside. We swore to avenge this.

After some time, we were ordered on. The Legion never remains long in the same place. We went to Ezraa, to join the force which was to move against Suweida. Two days later, a little after five in the morning, we came in sight of the town. The Druses had done a fine job of rebuilding, and had erected many stone blockhouses. They encircled the base of the hill. Many were on the hill. It appeared a hard place to take.

The Legion was the advance guard. That's where you will always find it—in front if it's an attack, fighting the rear guard action if it's retreat. As we started to advance, there came a shot. Then from every one of those stone blockhouses came a perfect storm of fire.

In a fight of this kind, each company knows only what it is doing itself. We crept up the hill. Every rock hid a Druse. We drove them into the open, shot them down when they leaped from

cover. And we had new guns that fired very heavy shots. One by one the block-houses were smashed to bits.

Of course, others were at work. The *tirailleurs* were close by. We heard the constant spatter of their machine-guns. For a while we simply went from rock to rock. The largest blockhouse was on top of the hill. The big guns took care of that. Shells dropped on it. As its defenders rushed for cover, we picked them off. Then for a few moments we waited for the others. The Legion was some distance in advance of the rest of the column.

What started our charge would be hard to tell. Men were swearing because they had been forced to halt. Some one rose to his feet and yelled: "*Allez!*" Then every man was on his feet. With a yell and a cheer, with fixed bayonets we charged upward. The Druses fired one round, turned and ran. At the entrance to the town we found a ditch. We sank down in it and waited for the rest of the army to come along. We had retaken Suweida.

Though we had taken the town, for days the Druses kept up a steady sniping. In fact we were forced to move some little distance from the town and build the usual walls. But after three days the fighting died down. The rebellion seemed to be over.

In fact, it was over. Day after day there would come into the camp spokesmen for tribes that wanted peace. The terms were easy: Every rifle had to be turned in, and a small indemnity was required. The French too wanted peace.

AFTER almost a year's fighting life seemed calm. But no one must think work was over for the Legion. In fact, it became harder, and more monotonous. After all, the Legion does everything. It builds roads, forts, and barracks. It moves guns when horses cannot do it. At Suweida, after the battle, it was detailed to build walls and ovens.

The work never ceased. We moved stones. We drilled. We built buildings. Every minute of the day we were busy. At night we stood guard. The recruits, of whom we had many, were wrecks. Even the old members of the company were growling.

There was another American in the company, called Gilbert Claire; his real name was Bennett Doty. Just why he joined the Legion I did not know. I saw little of him. But I knew his friends.

One was an Englishman, named John Harvey. After I got out of the Legion—seven years later—I learned Harvey was Welsh. He had served in the World War, and because of family troubles had fled to the Legion. He was orderly to an officer. After we got to Suweida, he and Doty became pals. He wrote a book on the Legion after he got out. It was never, I believe, published in America; but it was a good book.

There were others these two played around with: Weisser and Lass. Weisser had been in the German army during the World War. Why he was in the Legion I never knew. Lass had served in the German navy. He spoke English, and seemed to understand it. Doty, after we got to Suweida, became rather thick with these two and Harvey.

ONE night he came to my tent. We were the only Americans in the company. In fact, there were only four in the entire Legion, besides the negro Phillips.

Doty told me that he was fed up and that he thought of deserting. He wanted me to go along, whispered that Harvey and the two Germans would be with us.

Many a man tried to desert from the Legion. He had to have money to do it. Most of us had none. And every tribe in the desert was offered a reward if they picked up a deserting soldier of the Legion. If you deserted during a war or a campaign, and were captured, it meant death. In peace time it meant a prison term, from eight to ten years.

Of course men were always trying to get away. Once in a while one contrived to do it. Sometimes they managed to get almost within sight of a border, and then were captured. Many died in the desert. The Druses cut them down. To desert, was risky business.

But Doty told me he was fed up. Said it would be possible to reach the Turkish border. Once across, it would be safe.

I thought it over: I had been in the Legion almost two years and a half. In that time I had not heard from my mother in Des Moines. I was fed up too. But if they failed, it would mean I never would get out of the Legion—and that was one thing I wanted to do.

We talked it out night after night. It was apparent that Doty and his pals were going to try and get away. They seemed to think they would succeed. They had decided it would be impossible for them to take their rifles; but Harvey, because

of his position as orderly, could take his. They were certain they could make it.

There came a night when Doty came to my tent. They were to start in about thirty minutes. He begged me to go along. But I had thought it over. It seemed impossible. Calling me a fool, he left. The next morning, Doty, Weisser, Lass and Harvey were reported absent. Everyone knew what had happened.

It was over a month later that I heard of them again. At that moment I was in Beirut, waiting to go back to Africa.

They had been captured by natives, almost within sight of the border. What was more, they had been tried—and in Beirut I heard a rumor that Doty had been sentenced to death.

In a sense, though active warfare had ended, the French still had a few bands of roving tribes to put down. There was only one sentence for desertion during war. It was death. But before I left Beirut, I heard that Doty's sentence had been changed to a term in prison.

I was glad I had not gone with them.

Further exciting episodes in this American Legionnaire's extraordinary story will be described in our next issue.

Between Two Deaths

By WILLIAM CARROLL



WITH the increased price of gold today, prospecting is often a case of reëxamination of old and abandoned workings where one may find low-grade ore left standing in the mine; for now a profit is possible from ore formerly held not worth working. This often leads the prospector into dangers from insecure timbering in the caving ground, bad air and gases that may lie in unventilated workings, and the ever-present hazard of falling into partly covered or hidden shafts or winzes.

Last summer I was in a country south of the Carson River in the State of Nevada, and had come on to a shaft about thirty feet in depth that had been sunk a number of years ago. On the dump thrown out from this shaft I found pieces of quartz that, after crushing and panning, showed a considerable quantity of gold.

Part of the stringers or timbers that held the windlass frame were in place over the hole, but age and the weather had made them rather insecure. The ladder that had been used to enter and leave the shaft, however, was in place; and with reasonable care it could be used.

Wishing to determine just where the

quartz I had found came from, I descended into the shaft and found that the original discoverer had followed a small vein with his shaft, and had run a short drift on it a few feet out from the bottom of the shaft. This drift showed no increase in the size of the vein, but from appearances on the opposite side of the shaft, I decided that the vein might widen out if the shaft was continued deeper.

Some loose material had fallen, and pieces of the windlass-platform had also fallen and covered the bottom. It was first necessary to clean this out, and I returned to my truck to secure the necessary hammer, drills and dynamite, so that I could drill and blast the bottom after I had cleaned out the muck.

I worked steadily, throwing the loose rock back into the short drift, and it was not long before I was pounding away with a single jack. I found good drilling and put down four pretty fair holes.

I loaded them quite heavily with powder, and after placing my tools in the face of the short drift and covering them with some of the old plank, I lit the fuses with my carbide lamp and started up the ladder. As I had used a little over two feet of fuse, I figured I had at

BETWEEN TWO DEATHS

least two minutes to reach the top of the shaft and get back out of the way.

Not hurrying, but climbing steadily, I reached the top and was just about to place my hand on the last round of the ladder when an angry buzz stopped me. Before I looked, I knew that it was a rattlesnake, as there is no mistaking his danger signal. He was coiled on the timber to which the top of the ladder was fastened, and within short striking distance of the rung on which I was about to place my hand.

It took me a few seconds to realize the predicament I was in, but when it came to my mind that I just had to get around that snake or get him out of my way before the round of holes exploded in the bottom, I did some tall thinking in a very short time. The only thing I had to use on the snake except my bare hands was the carbide lamp, and I let that drive straight as I could throw at him. The only result was to make him more active, and his flat head and fangs kept darting back and forth too close for comfort.

I knew then that I had to pick some other way out of the hole or take my chance on what those fangs would do to me. I never put much faith in the theory that a rattler's bite is not necessarily fatal. I just didn't want to be bitten by him!

The shaft had been started pretty wide at the collar, and weather and erosion had taken off more ground until it was fully eight feet to the opposite wall—too far to reach unless I used the insecure stringer. Under normal circumstances I would not have trusted half my weight on it, but it was the one chance, and I took it. Hand over hand I went, every second expecting to hear a crack that would plunge me to death below; but my luck—and the timber—held; and at the other wall I succeeded in raising myself to the crumbling ground on which the stringer rested. I just reached this perch when the first hole exploded, and I made fast time scrambling out of the line of the shaft. Just one rock from that first shot caught me on the leg, but although it was a numbing blow, it didn't stop me from getting clear before the other three holes exploded.

I would like to end up by saying that I returned to find a bonanza in the hole, but after clearing the broken rock out the next day, I found the streak had almost pinched out entirely. What happened to the snake, I never did discover!



A Son of

*Further exciting episodes in the
who has caught over a thousand
U. S. Marshal put over seven hun-*

By JOHN

THE Bert Casey gang had robbed the post office at Marlow, I. T., in August, and afterward held up a stage-coach which made regular trips from Rush Springs, I. T., to the New Country.

As a member of the sheriff's force, I joined in the search for Bert Casey and his outlaw gang, which terrorized the Twin Territories from 1901 till 1904. I was personally associated with Sheriff Frank Smith and Deputy George Beck, of Anadarko, both of whom were murdered the day after Christmas, 1901, near Fort Cobb, Caddo county, trying to arrest the outlaws, who had taken refuge in an abandoned ranch-house.

I had been appointed a deputy under U. S. Marshal Bill Fossett. I was notified by telegram from headquarters at Guthrie, to meet another deputy in Lawton. Upon meeting the other deputy he said to me: "We have a bad man to arrest, who is hiding in a dugout, in the Wichita Mountains. We must find out from the supervisor of the Forest Reserve just where the dugout is located."

A distance of thirty-five miles had to be traveled before the officers could reach the Forest Supervisor.

"I'll bet you boys are after Keller," said that official when we reached him.

"Yes," I said, and he remarked: "I am sorry for you, for Keller never will be taken alive."

I learned from the supervisor the location of the dugout, but in order to get to the place, it was necessary to go back to the town of Cache. Just as we drove into the town, the passenger train for Lawton came in from the west. As it pulled into the depot, the other deputy



the Frontier

*career of "Catch 'em Alive" Jack,
wolves alive with his hands, and as
dred outlaws in the penitentiary.*

ABERNATHY

took the warrant out of his pocket and said to me: "You get him if you can. I've got to go to Lawton." I then took the warrant, driving to the farm of Jim Simmons, district farmer for the Comanche Indians. I spent the night with Simmons, telling him of the mission I had to perform, and invited him to go along with me.

"My father went with a deputy one time, to arrest a bad man in Missouri, and had to kill the man," said Simmons, "and he came near never getting out of the trouble." I told Simmons that he need not go along. However, he had the horses I had requested ready next morning. After driving eight miles west and ten north, just as I left the homestead area, I saw a man dodge behind a house. I called him over and persuaded him to get into the buggy and go along to a point where it was possible to locate the dugout. We traveled about eight miles. The country near the dugout was very rough, being covered with heavy timber and underbrush. A spot about a mile distant, near a certain mountain peak, was pointed out as the possible location of the outlaw's dugout. The stranger then disappeared hastily.

I drove ahead about one hundred and fifty yards, then stopped and tied the tongue of the buggy to a tree. This was the only manner in which to tie wild horses safely. It was just a little after sunup, that morning when I tied the team. Taking my rifle out of the buggy, I started at a pretty fast walk, for I was anxious to get the job done. I came to a mountain stream with running water. I waded this cold water,

waist-deep, in crossing. I kept my eyes on the peak, but failed to find the dugout or any signs of civilization. Dropping back a hundred and fifty yards to the southeast, I made my way back to the horses. While greatly disappointed, I afterward regarded my failure to locate the dugout that hour in the morning as fortunate, for otherwise I might not have been left to tell the story. This outlaw would have had every advantage of me in the dugout.

I rested for a while, then thought to myself: "I've got to get my man." I again waded the creek but I went a little farther to the northwest, as I began searching the underbrush. I was slipping along quietly over a path which led through the brush, when I heard a sound like some one chopping wood. I knew the chopping was being done by Keller, for there was nobody else living within ten miles of the place. I could hear about five licks on the log with the ax; then there was a delay for a moment or two. I took this delay to mean that the woodchopper was scouting, watching to see if anyone was near.

I kept slipping along through the underbrush, until finally I saw a little open place. I could tell from the sound of the ax that the woodchopper was right in the edge of the brush, just a short distance away. I knelt to examine my six-shooter; and as I did so, I said, "God have mercy upon us!" and got up again. I advanced about ten steps, then stepped right out into the open. There stood Keller! My rifle was pointed toward Keller, as I stepped out into the open. I took a dead bead, pointing at his heart. Then I shouted at the top of my voice:

"Hands up, Keller!"

KELLER did not move. He just stood looking at me like a mean bull. I pulled the trigger, but it only snapped, and instantly, I threw another cartridge into the barrel when Keller refused to put his hands up. This was all I could do, since he disobeyed my command. Keller's pistol was on the ground near the stump of the tree he had just chopped down. I felt that he could not get to the gun, since it was between us, and I was closer to the gun than Keller. When the cartridge failed to explode, it was a new experience in my life. Never before had I had a gun snap when I pulled the trigger. Like lightning, I pumped another cartridge into the barrel, cursing Keller as I did so. Then Keller started

to put up his hands, slowly. I forced him to back up and away from the ax. He had no gun, as far as I could see. With his coat off, I was sure I could see he was without a weapon of any kind.

Keller's six-shooter was on the ground by his vest, which he had removed while chopping. I walked sidewise, holding my rifle on him, advancing toward the gun and picked it up.

"I have thirteen guns trained on you, Keller! If you make a wrong move, you will drop dead in your tracks!" I shouted. "Turn your face to the west and step lively," I continued. "If you make an awkward move, I will call my aides from the brush, and they'll all fire on you."

I could have dropped Keller single-handed, but I did not want to; so I ran my bluff and made it stick. I forced him to hit the path and keep looking ahead. As he walked in front of me, I let him put down his hands. When we got to the mountain stream, he asked me what to do, and I said: "Hit the water and hit it hard."

KELLER waded the water with his clothes on, and I did likewise. This was my fourth time that day to wade this stream, and there wasn't a dry thread in my clothes below the waist. I knew better than to try to handcuff Keller, while marching him down from the hide-out. Had I tried to do this without help, I know Keller would have got me. He was of the brawny mountaineer type, about one hundred and ninety pounds in weight, and without a pound of surplus flesh. He was seven inches taller than I. Keller kept looking for the aides, of whom I told him in arresting him. I forced him to untie the team, then made him come back on the same side of the buggy I was on. He got inside, and I sat down, jam up against him. I did the driving with my left hand, holding my right hand on my pistol. I also had Keller's pistol, and my rifle, beside me. As Keller tried to look back, I told him to look ahead. We drove to the homestead area and Keller said to me:

"If you hadn't told me that G— d— lie, I wouldn't be here." And I replied:

"Yes, you would; you would be here but in a different shape!"

I drove to Cache with Keller as my prisoner, where Simmons, the Comanche district farmer, was waiting with one hundred armed Indians. He told me it

was his plan to start the armed Indians on a search of the underbrush and the mountains. I gave Simmons a wink, and he caught it. Simmons came around to my side of the buggy and I whispered to him, "Put the cuffs on Keller," and he did so instantly. I took a long breath, in relief, as the handcuffs were placed upon the prisoner. Marshal Bill Fossett sent me to Covington, Kentucky, with Keller. The prisoner was under sentence of death, and had escaped jail. Three weeks later he was executed. He had been convicted of killing three persons in Kentucky.

IN the fall of 1899 two Revenue officers came to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in search of a large still which was being operated about twelve miles away. They hung around for a couple of days and got the location, then decided to go out into the woods and look around, hoping to discover and capture the still.

When they had almost reached their destination, they came upon a boy about sixteen years old, red-headed and freckle faced, sitting on a log, whittling.

One of the men said: "Hello, son. Watching the birds and the squirrels?"

He replied: "Nope! I'm watching my Daddy's still right up the hollow there."

"Oh, yes, I've heard of those things," said the other officer. "Son, I'll give you a dollar to show us the still; we never did see one."

"All right," said the boy, "give me the dollar."

"Oh," they said, "come on. We'll give you the dollar when we come back."

The boy kept whittling on the log, unconcerned, and said to the officers:

"You better give me the dollar now; you're not coming back."

That declaration caused the officers to hesitate, and they turned and said to the boy:

"Son, we'll give you the dollar when we come back next time. We'll see you again."

About an hour before this happened I was riding from Oklahoma to Fort Smith, and just as I came to where I was to ford the Arkansas River, I met a Cherokee Indian with two sacks of whisky tied on behind his saddle. I jerked my gun and threw down on him and said:

"Indian, you're under arrest; put your hands up." He obeyed. I told him:

"Now slide off that horse, and keep both hands up to the saddle-horn."

I walked up and relieved him of the .45 that was in his belt, and upon closer searching I found a little double-barreled Derringer in his coat pocket. I couldn't help but smile when I found that weapon, and said:

"Untie that whisky and let it drop to the ground." While he was doing that he had his back to me, so I drew all the shells out of his revolver and put them in my pocket; when he turned around I handed him his empty gun, but of course he did not know it was empty. I said:

"Now put this in your belt and leave it there; if you try to get it, you will be a dead Indian. Get your horse and take me to where you got this whisky!"

He obeyed orders.

WE forded the Arkansas River—it swam us a short distance. It wasn't over a mile to the still. Of course the Indian took me in the path that customers traveled, and when we arrived, the two men who were in charge, and who knew the Indian very well and thought I was another customer, didn't make any attempt to get their guns.

I dismounted and covered the men with both of my six-shooters. I saw them glance at their guns leaning up against a tree not over ten feet away. I said:

"Don't look at those guns; you can't use them. Walk over there to that bench and sit down."

I glanced at the Indian and said:

"Indian, jerk your gun. What did I bring you along for?" He obeyed. I kept glancing around for the third or fourth man, for from the looks of things, I knew it took quite a number to operate the still. But luck was with me that day for the owner (a killer and bad man) was visiting a neighbor three miles away. However, I learned afterward that the two men under arrest were just as bad as they ever get to be, but I had the drop on them.

About that time up walked the red-headed, freckle-faced boy, with his hand lying on the handle of a .45. He recognized the Indian, who was a customer; but seeing the Indian with his gun drawn, the boy said, "What does this mean?" At the same time he spied me, and I switched one gun in his direction, saying:

"Put 'em up, kid, and put 'em quick!"—at the same time telling the Indian to get the boy's gun and bring it to me.

"Indian," I said, "take that boy and

go down to that house and get a wagon and team and bring it here quickly."

In less than three-quarters of an hour they were back with a good team and wagon. I gave orders for them to load up. I had them put the worm in the wagon along with several gallons of whisky and several gallons of mash. I made my two prisoners get into the wagon. I told the Cherokee to take the lines, and I had the red-headed boy get on the Indian's horse and ride with me—which was lucky for me, for as we drove out from the still we had to pass by the owner's house, and a woman ran out carrying a double-barreled shotgun and held up the procession. I said:

"Woman, drop that gun or I'll kill your boy."

She dropped the gun—but I felt uncomfortable, for I thought she might shoot me in the back as we rode away.

We had traveled on the road about three miles when I noticed two men walking ahead of us, who proved to be the two Revenue officers previously mentioned. One of them asked: "Are you an officer? Are those men under arrest?"

I said: "Yep."

About that time one of the prisoners slugged the Indian, knocking him loose from the lines, and the other prisoner grabbed the lines and started the horses at breakneck speed. I threw spurs to my horse and shot in ahead of them, firing a few shots from my gun, and stopped them.

This awakened the two Revenue officers, and they came as hard as they could toward us. I looked for my boy, and he was riding the timber at breakneck speed. I knew I couldn't catch him and keep the still and my two prisoners. The Revenue men ran up and I demanded:

"If you are officers, take charge of those prisoners, and one of you drive to Fort Smith just as quick as you can." I realized the boy would notify the hillbillies and his daddy, and I would have them to contend with.

Sure enough, in less than an hour, there were several men on horseback at the jail, with rifles and shotguns, inquiring for "the boy on a red roan horse." Of course I was that "boy."

SEVEN years later, after I had become United States Marshal for Oklahoma, I had delivered a bunch of prisoners to the penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, and was walking through the penitentiary in company with the

warden, when a young man asked the warden's permission to speak with me, which was granted. I went up to the young fellow.

He said: "I'm the boy who got away from you at Fort Smith, Arkansas."

I said: "Are you doing time for that job?"

"No," he replied, "I only got a year and a day, but Joe and Bob got fifteen years to do."

I inquired: "What became of your daddy?"

"They killed him," he said, "about two years and a half after you grabbed that still; but he got three of them while they were killing him."

"Well, son," I said, "don't you see that crime doesn't pay?"

To which he replied: "Yes, I do; and if I ever get out of here, I'm going to live a different life."

I WAS occasionally permitted to hunt and catch wolves while serving as deputy marshal. Colonel Cecil A. Lyon, lumber and hardware magnate of Sherman, Texas, was staging rabbit races in his park, located between Sherman and Denison. It was at this racing event that I met Colonel Lyon for the first time. Lyon, being National Republican committeeman as well as a National Guard commander, had become a great hunting companion of the new President, Theodore Roosevelt.

The two-day exhibition at Colonel Lyon's park was a great success and attracted large crowds. Colonel Lyon saw me perform, and was greatly impressed with the exhibition of skill. Among the dogs that I used was one called Cannon-ball; it was so named because it would not tackle a wolf unless a gun was fired.

I had become exceedingly wearied on the final day of the entertainment, and I ran into the box-office at the park to get a drink of water. The ticket seller offered me a drink of whisky, saying:

"Jack, you look tired; have a little swig of this—it won't hurt you."

I swallowed a big drink, and quickly returned to the grounds. Directing my aides, I had Cannon-ball and the wolf turned loose, for the final event.

"Take the saddle off," shouted a dozen or more in the grandstand as the race started. I jerked off the saddle, leaping onto my horse bareback.

Racing around the track three times, the dog remained side by side with the wolf without offering to bite. The sheriff fired into the air. At the crack of the pistol, Cannon-ball grabbed for the wolf, and the fight was on. I leaped for the loafer, as the crowd cheered wildly.

Giving the loafer my right hand as was my custom, I straddled the animal with my legs. I looked back to see if the negro helpers were coming with wire to tie the jaws, when suddenly the wolf bit me several times in the right hand. I hurled the pistol to the ground; again grabbing the wolf, I clinched it, holding firmly till the negroes came up.

I believe it was the whisky which I drank that caused me to have this accident. Following this, I took an oath to never again take a drink of liquor, if I had a wolf to catch or a bad man to capture. I decided once and forever that whisky or any other kind of liquor slowed my speed, dimmed my eyes and made me nervous. Whisky has no place in the make-up of a man who has an important duty to perform.

While the knowledge of my ability to catch wild wolves alive without the aid of snare, trap or noosed rope had long been so general in the range cattle country of western Texas and neighboring States as to occasion little comment, it aroused great interest when a demonstration was thus staged in Colonel Lyon's park in Grayson County. It was only natural that Colonel Lyon should have thought of bringing it to President Roosevelt's attention.

WHILE in Washington, soon after, Colonel Lyon told President Roosevelt about seeing a Texas cowboy catch wolves with his bare hands. The President was always interested in clean outdoor sports. While this story interested him, his first thought was that Colonel Lyon was joking about such a stunt. With some difficulty Colonel Lyon convinced the President of the truthfulness of his statements about the cowboy wolf-catcher, and the President expressed a desire to see this feat performed.

Plans already were under way for President Roosevelt's bear-hunt in Texas and Louisiana as the guest of Colonel Lyon. The President wrote a letter of inquiry to me, asking if it would be possible to stage a wolf-hunt. In my reply I readily agreed to stage the event.

The story of the great wolf-hunt staged for President Theodore Roosevelt will be told in our next issue.



Too-Fay!

Mr. Forman started his career as an airplane salesman in the Orient, but has since won fame as an explorer of remote China and Tibet. Here he tells a spirited story of battle with bandits.

By HARRISON FORMAN

OPIUM! Opium! Miles and miles of poppy-fields. No wonder famine raged in China, when warlords forced the peasants to grow the greater-tax-producing opium instead of rice or other grain. I turned to Mr. Simpson, who was sitting beside me.

"In all your forty years of missionary work in China, have you ever—"

Crash!

The side windshield shattered suddenly, peppering me with bits of glass. Another bullet ripped through my shirt-sleeve; a third pinged past my ear. Instinctively I reached for my .45. Simpson grabbed my hand.

"Wait! Look! We haven't a chance."

A score or more of ragged coolie bandits—*too-fay*—had lined themselves across the road, firing as fast as they could work their rifle-bolts. spurts of dust kicked and spat all around us.

I thought fast. There *was* a chance. I would "step on her" and crash that line. My shoulders began to hunch as I depressed the accelerator. Then:

"For God's sake, stop!" yelled Simpson. "I've been hit!"

I hesitated. After all, my life wasn't the only one at risk. I reached for the emergency. A screech of brakes, and we skidded to a stop in a cloud of dust.

Firing spasmodically as they came, the ragged band reached the car.

"*Lai-la! Lai-la! Quai-quai-tee-a!* Come out! Come out! Hurry up!"

We got out clumsily, hands over our heads. I was glad to note that Simpson had not been shot—only hit by a piece of flying glass.

A vicious-looking lot they were. They worked fast, hustling us around, stripping us of our valuables and ripping open our baggage. Just then I felt my

shirt-tail pulled out from behind. I looked around to see an undersized little punk, bristling with two pistols and a rifle, scowling at me.

I was puzzled. Was he trying to kid me?

"*Nee yao shemo?*" I asked. But instead of telling me what he wanted, he flung me an oath and shuffled off.

I shrugged my shoulders. It must be some old Chinese custom, I thought. I turned to watch the looting.

Suddenly I felt a pistol jabbed into my ribs from behind. "*Quai-tee-a! Quai-tee-a!*" hissed the persistent little villain of the shirt-tail-pulling complex. "*Gee wo! Gee wo!*"

"Oh, you want my shirt? Well, why the devil didn't you say so?" I took it off and handed it to him.

As he reached for it, a bundle of loot began to slip from beneath his arm. In an effort to save it from falling with his be-pistoled hand, the gun went off—the bullet grazing my shin and burying itself in the ground between my legs.

Instantly I became the focus for a score of gun-muzzles. I quickly threw my hands into the air and smiled blandly. A tense moment. I dared not move. . . . Silence.

Somebody laughed. Others joined him. The leader spoke a sharp word to the youngster, and I lowered my arms.

Loaded with loot, like a pack of gorged ghouls, they started away, dragging Simpson along with them. I called to the leader for an explanation.

"Go back," he said. "Say that we want one hundred thousand dollars ransom for your friend—or we send him back to you in pieces!"

To plead or reason with them was, of course, out of the question. Hastily I

examined the car: Nothing vital hit. I got in and started for help.

Five miles down the road I came to a town. After much impatient remonstrating with the commandant of the garrison (he insisted that the score or so that we had met were only scouts of a band of several hundred bandits who had been reported headed this way), he finally gave the order for pursuit.

With the colonel and myself at the head of five hundred troops, well-armed with rifles, pistols, sub-machine guns and hand grenades, in addition to the usual blanket-rolls, tin cups and umbrellas (it looked like rain, and the Chinese soldier hates rain), we set out after the bandits.

Hours later we picked up their trail. And it was a bloody one! Whole villages had been ravaged and nearly annihilated. The shrieks and wailings of the few survivors amid the flaming ruins filled the air. Women, young and old alike, lay about crimson with blood from slashed breasts, with babes in their arms whose heads had been crushed by blows of gun-butts. Men, simple peasants who had rushed in from the fields with hoes and pitchforks in their hands to offer defense, lay about horribly mutilated by bayonet-thrusts and slashes from the wicked Chinese curved swords.

My blood froze. Mr. Simpson in such hands! Perhaps he had already been murdered.

Our advance scouts returned and reported the bandits entering a deep cañon a few miles ahead, apparently unaware of our pursuit. Heavily laden with loot, they moved slowly.

They were mounted. We were infantry, except for about twenty mounted scouts. Yet it was possible, if we moved quickly, to trap them in the cañon by a flanking movement to the left. I explained my plan to the Colonel, and asked for the twenty horsemen.

"*Pu-ko-ee! Pu-ko-ee!*" he said. "No can do! That is impossible. There are too many of them. You will all be killed."

I PERSISTED. Finally he consented. With the twenty horsemen, we galloped off. We arrived at the cañon's rim just in time to see the bandits, three hundred or more of them, scaling the opposite side. We dismounted. I deployed my men. Each found shelter behind some rock or tree. I ordered them to make themselves thoroughly comfortable, laying out all their ammuni-

tion before them, so that it would be within easy reach; even making sure their rifle-sights were set for the distance the bandits were from us—about three hundred yards, in the cañon below.

Then I gave the order to fire.

DELIBERATELY, without hurry, we began the slaughter. No wasting of ammunition—draw a bead on a man and press the trigger. We were murderously methodical. Comparatively secure in our position, we cut them down one by one. They could not fight back. They had no idea how many were opposing them, nor where the shots came from. Besides, there was no cover for them in that cañon of death. Bewildered, caught like mice in a trap, the bandits desperately lashed their animals up the cliff-side to cross the opposite cañon-rim to safety from our decimating fire.

It was curious to lie there, calm, unhurried, picking them off one at a time—something like target practice on the rifle range.

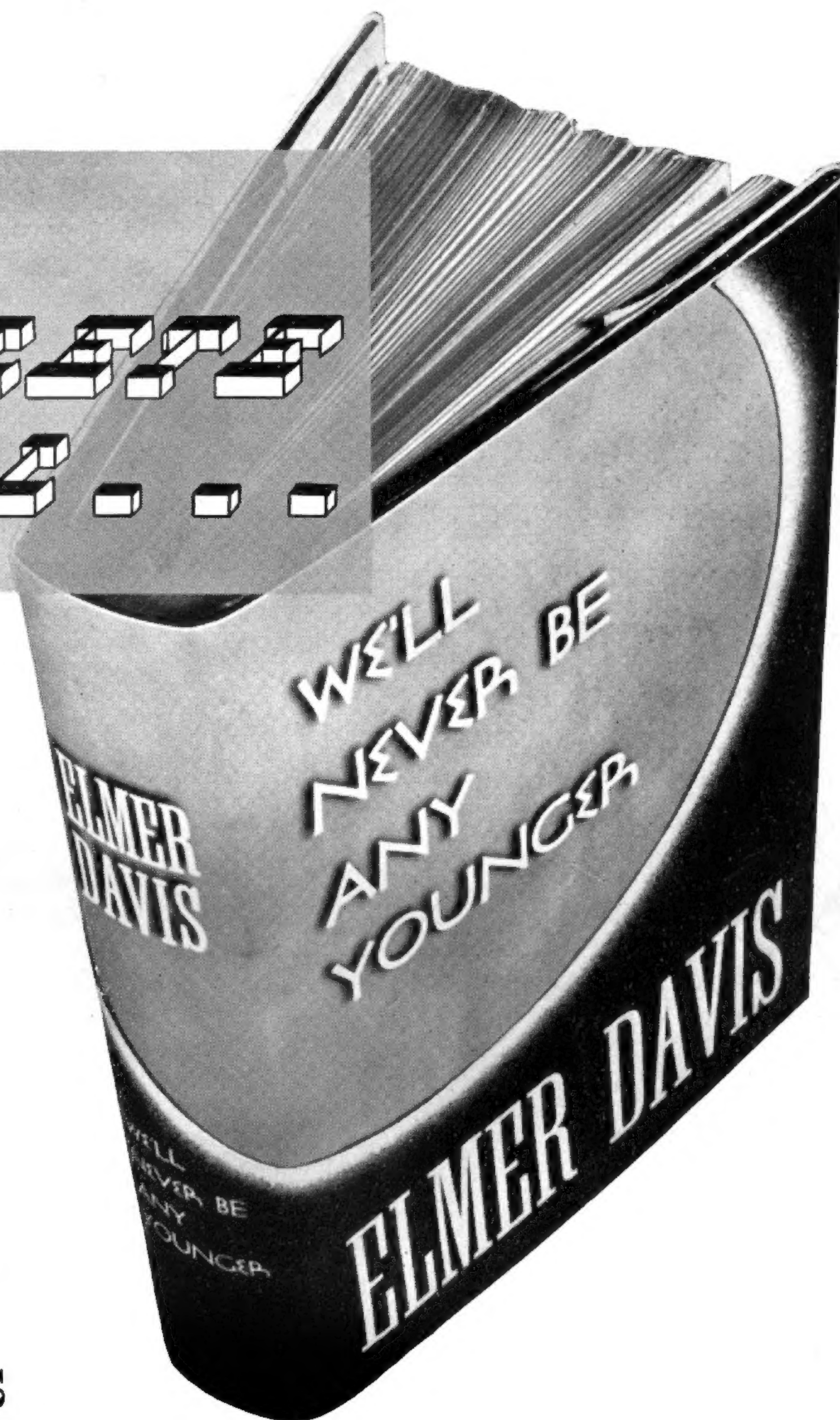
Suddenly I spied Simpson, surrounded by a group of about a dozen men. I ordered a concentration of fire to points in their immediate vicinity. As I expected, they became panic-stricken and abandoned their prisoner in an attempt to get clear of the leaden hail.

Simpson took advantage of the opportunity and wheeled his horse in our direction, quirting his mount with the leading rein. We yelled encouragement to him, though we knew he could never have heard us at that distance. Two of the bandits stopped in their flight and began to empty their pistols at his back. Hardly pausing to aim, I fired a whole clip of shells at them in rapid succession. Luck was with me,—and Simpson,—for one fellow slumped and fell from the saddle, and the other's horse buckled beneath him. Quickly I inserted another clip of cartridges in the breech while the second fellow tore at his saddle-bags on his fallen mount, which must have contained his share of the loot. But though I followed him all the way up that cliff with dust-geysers, he got away.

Nevertheless twenty-four bandit heads festooned the city walls that next day—grim testimony to our "target practice." Too bad we hadn't a machine-gun with us! But by the time the infantry had come up, the rest of the bandits had crossed the cañon rim and we gave up the chase.

This Month's

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NOW . . .



A story of those
Stern Youngsters

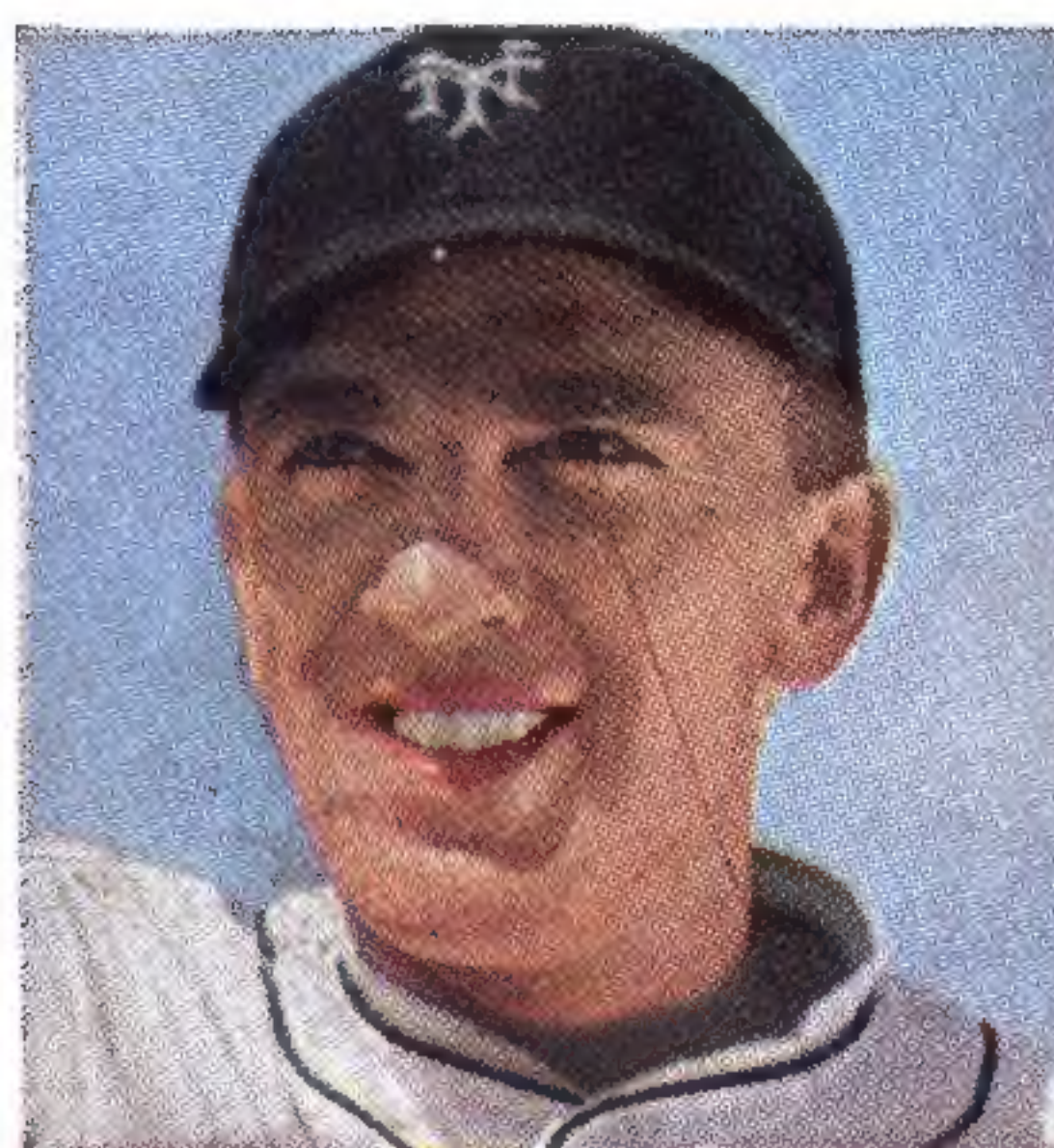
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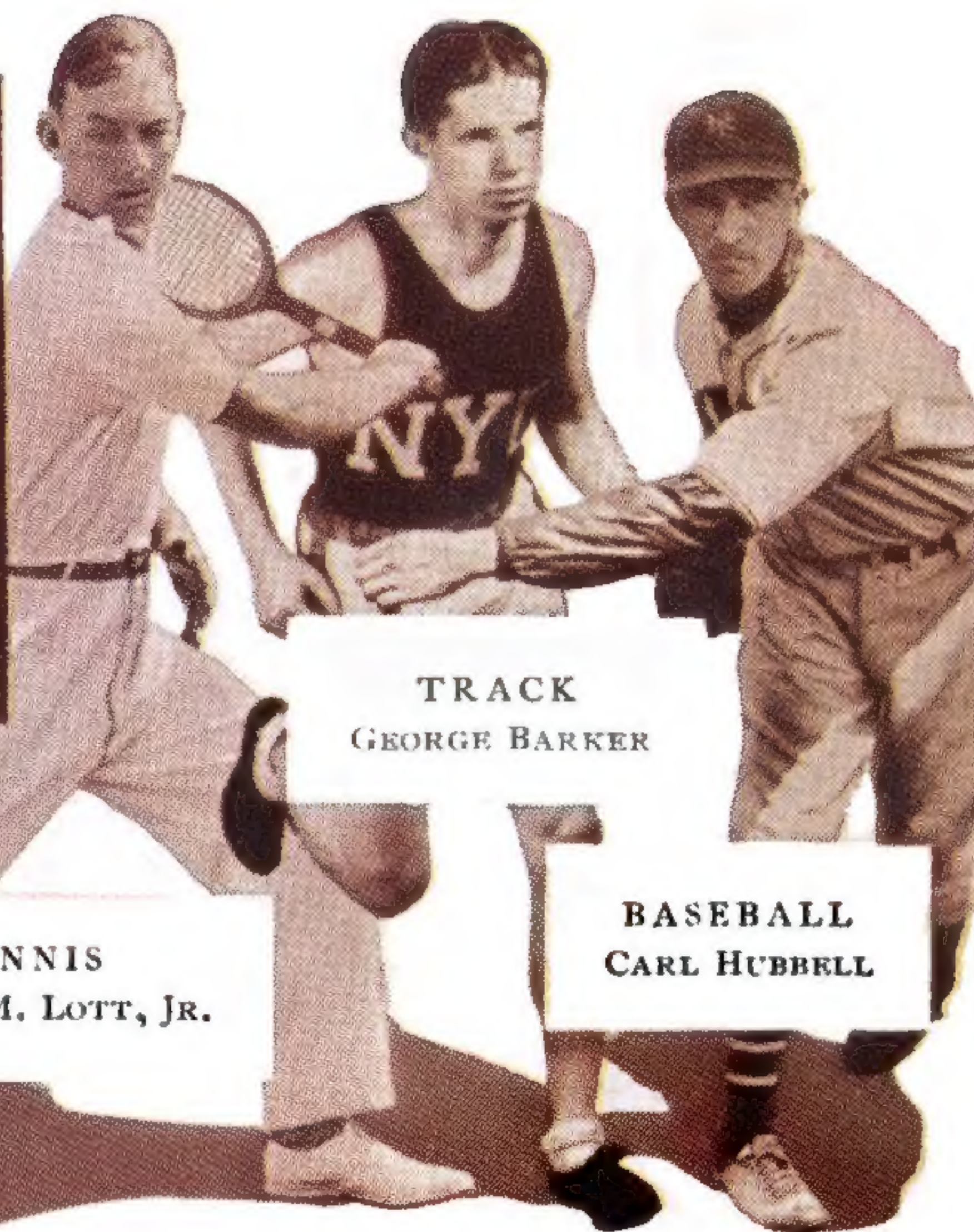
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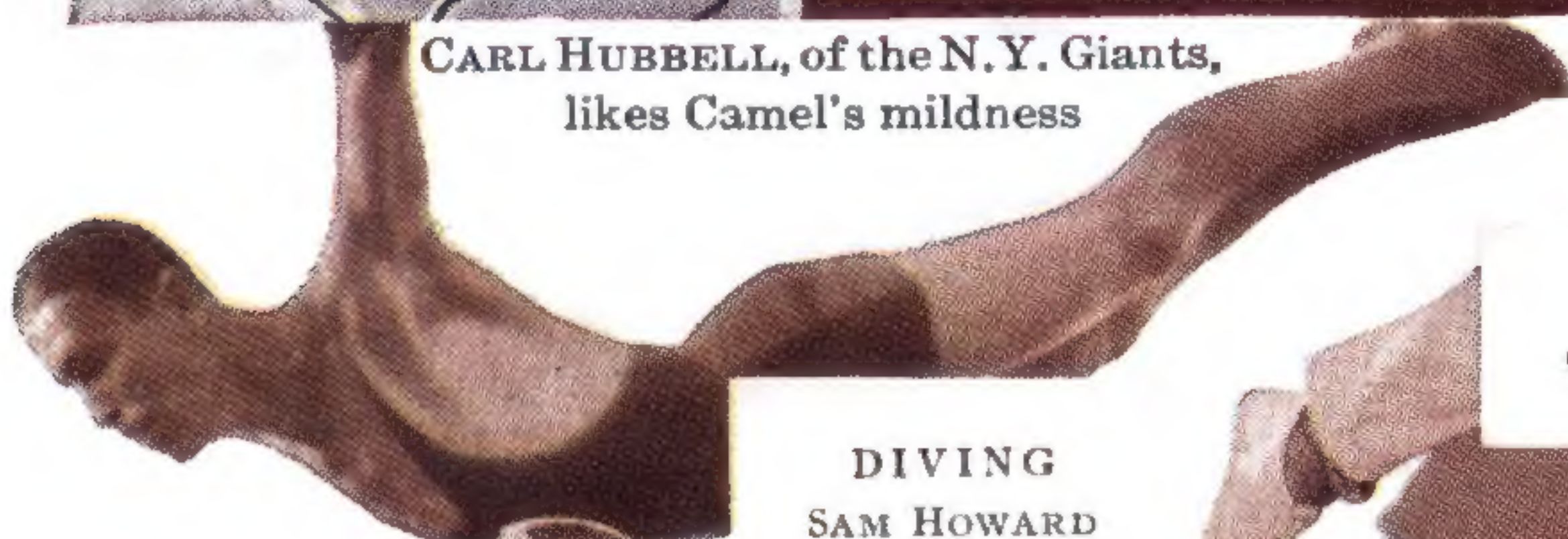
ATHLETES SAY:
"THEY DON'T
GET
YOUR WIND!"



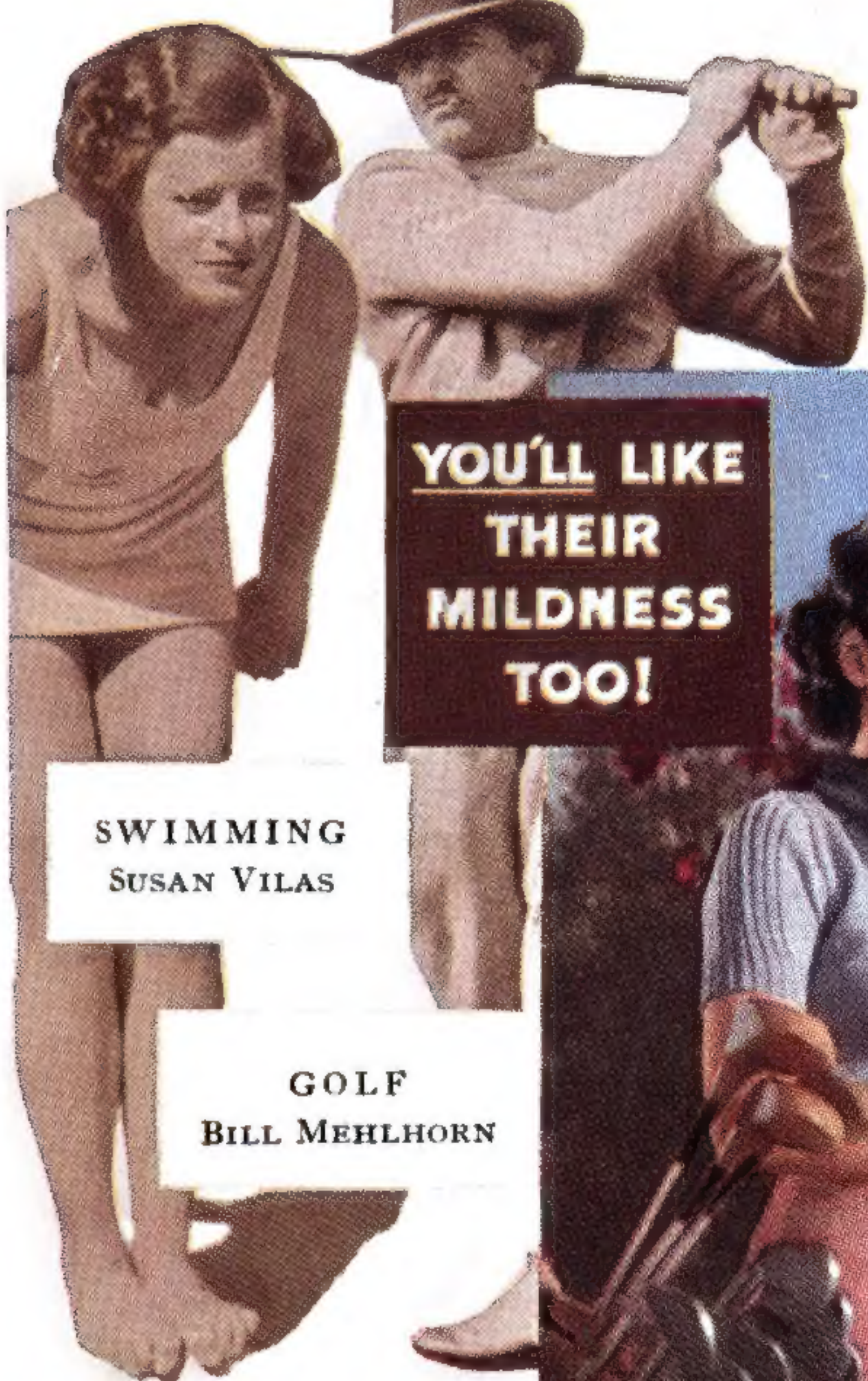
TRACK
GEORGE BARKER

BASEBALL
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